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Ever-Changing Fortunes

Mine Your Own Business

by Peter Zollers

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"Ever-Changing Fortunes" is a D&D adventure designed for four 2nd-level characters. PCs who survive the adventure should earn enough experience points (XP) to reach 3rd level. The party should include at least one PC who speaks Dwarven or Draconic. The module can be modified for PCs of levels 1-8 by increasing or decreasing the strength and number of antagonists, as discussed in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

Magic Items Monsters Non-Player Characters (NPCs) Objects Settlements Traps

Adventure Summary

The PCs are present when a kobold is caught trying to sneak into the town of Dorr. As the guards chase it away, it pleads for help. The fact that a kobold has risked its life to come to a human settlement for help should persuade the PCs to become involved. After the PCs befriend the kobold, he introduces himself as Akara and asks for help freeing his people. Akara's "people" are, in fact, a clan of dwarves. The dwarves have been used as slave labor in their own copper mine since it was taken over by a drow cleric and his troglodyte bodyguards.

If the PCs want to help Akara, they must journey south to the copper mine, which is located in the Vision Peaks near the headwaters of Rumblerun River. The journey from Dorr to the mine takes about six days on foot (at Akara's pace). The trip takes only three days on horseback, but the kobold fears horses and refuses to approach them, so the PCs must travel at his pace even if they ride. He also prefers to travel at night but does not insist.

Along the way to the copper mine, the PCs are attacked by a group of bandits based in the Wailing Wood and might visit a tavern near Arpyn's Ford, on the Rumblerun River. If the PCs visit the tavern, they gain some information on the current situation at the mine. If the PCs speak openly of their mission, a spy for the bandits overhears them and informs his comrades, allowing the bandits to prepare another ambush as the PCs return from the mountains with their loot.

When the PCs reach the mine, they must find a way inside. The bridge leading to the main entrance has been destroyed and the doors blockaded, but there is concealed entrance that leads to the mine through a system of natural caves. The caves are home to a small tribe of kobolds. From the caves, the PCs must find their way into the mine itself and defeat the cleric and his troglodyte troops. This feat is much easier if the PCs manage to free some of the prisoners first. If the mine is liberated, the grateful dwarves offer each PC the equivalent of 2,000 cp, a masterwork item, and a debt of honor.

Adventure Background

The copper mine complex where Akara's people are located consists of the caves in which the copper was originally discovered and the mine created as the dwarves dug out the metal-bearing ore. While copper is not normally prized by dwarves, this mine was fairly rich and capable of producing the equivalent of 1,000 cp per month. In the early days of the mine, however, the dwarves suffered a serious manpower shortage and were having trouble mining enough ore to make ends meet. Then one of their tunnels broke into a cave system occupied by a tribe of kobolds; the resulting battle ended with over half the kobolds surrendering to the dwarven miners. Instead of putting the prisoners to death, the dwarves put the kobolds to work, and the mine began to prosper.

Frequent kobold riots and work stoppages led the dwarves to separate out a kobold egg in the hopes of raising a chieftain who could control the kobolds. That egg yielded Akara, who was then raised among the dwarves so that he would see them as friends. Unfortunately, the nurturing that assured Akara's good alignment also made him passive. Unable to subjugate his kobold brethren, Akara became a mascot of the dwarven clan.

Life changed for both Akara and the dwarves when a drow cleric named Da'treaal discovered the mine while on a slave raid and decided to claim its riches for his family, the House of Achria. He set up an ambush in the woods and waited for the next group of dwarves to leave the mine. This group was headed to Arpyn's Ford on a supply run, and although the dwarves spotted the ambush, Da'treaal's forces managed to capture most of them. Da'treaal then sent a message to the mine demanding a small ransom for the captured dwarves. When the dwarves agreed to pay the ransom, Da'treaal sent a troglodyte escort with the prisoners under orders to attack as soon as the gates of the mine were opened. The troglodytes attacked as ordered and were able to keep the gates open long enough for the rest of Da'treaal's forces to join the battle and overwhelm the dwarves by sheer numbers.

Scaling the Adventure

"Ever-Changing Fortunes" is designed for four 2nd-level PCs but can also be played with 5-6 1st-level PCs or 2-3 3rd-level PCs with few or no modifications.

If you are modifying the adventure for four PCs of higher or lower level, consider the following changes:

1st-level PCs

Allow the PCs time to rest and recuperate between encounters. Also be aware that encounters with an EL of 4 or higher will likely result in PC fatalities. Consider reducing the number of kobolds in area 8 (or spreading them out in the lower caves). The PCs should also be given an opportunity to negotiate with Krista Ferns' bandits for safe passage around the Wailing Wood (see area A).

For the final encounter with Da'treaal, consider reducing the drow cleric's level by 1 and removing two or more of the troglodytes in that encounter or relocating them to an unoccupied area of the mine.

3rd- to 4th-level PCs

Consider giving the bandit spies Harry and Greta 1 or 2 more levels in rogue and making Krista Ferns' bandits 1st-level rogues instead of commoners; use Table 2-41 on page 55 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to generate appropriate statistics and equipment for these rogue NPCs.

Give Ryl and Ironhide 1 or 2 additional class levels, and add one more troglodyte to each troglodyte encounter. If the PCs are having an easy time with the kobolds, consider doubling the number of kobolds encountered in some areas or adding several dire rat pets to the encounters in areas 6, 8, and 25. Give Da'treaal some additional dwarf zombie guards or a troglodyte lieutenant with statistics identical to Ryl's.

5th- to 7th-level PCs

Increase the levels of the various "name" NPCs (Krista Ferns, Harry, Greta, Ryl, Ironhide, and Da'treaal) using the tables in Chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and give the weaker kobolds and troglodytes a few class levels in warrior or fighter. If an encounter still seems too easy, increase the number of adversaries present or give Da'treaal a powerful ally (an annis, a troll or two, or a very young black dragon) to lead the troops. Also consider giving Da'treaal's troglodytes weapons coated with drow sleep poison.

Adapting the Adventure

This adventure can easily be adapted for the GREYHAWK campaign setting by locating the town of Dorr toward the center of Furyondy and the dwarven mine near the Kron Hills. Ruoyna's Den would be located on the Velverdyva River.

This adventure can easily be adapted to the SPELLJAMMER campaign setting by placing the dwarven mine in an asteroid and having Akara wash onto the deck of the PCs' ship. Da'treaal's race need not be changed, but the troglodytes could become giff and the kobolds any diminutive, cowardly alien race such as rock hoppers. In this scenario, Da'treaal discovered the mine while looking for a place to set down his damaged ship and is forcing the dwarves to repair it before he can make off with their copper.

When he discovered that the mine contained only copper, Da'treaal was disappointed, but he was unwilling to return to the House of Achria with nothing after losing so many troops. To avoid the risks of transporting the dwarvish copper across the surface world, Da'treaal is using dwarven prisoners to dig a tunnel connecting the mine to a passage that leads back to the House of Achria.

Da'treaal assumed Akara to be just another mine laborer and treated him no differently than the other kobolds, assigning him menial tasks. Two weeks ago, while taking food to the troglodytes at the entrance to the mine, Akara spilled hot stew on one of them. The incensed troglodyte hurled him into the stream that ran past the mine entrance. Akara survived the rough ride downstream and washed ashore, whereupon he formulated a desperate plan to save his dwarven friends.

Beginning the Adventure

The town of Dorr sprung up many years ago at the intersection of the Queen's Highway and the Farsouth Road, the primary route by which trade goods from the south make their way to consumers in the north. The town is surrounded by a 12-foot-high stone wall with three gates that allow access to the roads. The central keep—which serves as the military barracks and the residence of the ruling Sheriff—is little more than a large, square tower, but the marketplace is a sight to behold with its wide streets and its colorful merchant stalls.

Dorr (Large Town): Conventional; AL LN; 3,000-gp limit; Assets 105,000 gp; Population 3,400 (37% human, 20% halfling, 18% elf, 10% dwarf, 7% gnome, 5% half-elf, 3% half-orc).

Authority Figure: Sheriff Arndor Baroghast, male human Ari3/War2.

Important Characters: Ennax Pelerion (high cleric of the temple of St. Cuthbert), male human Clr7; Laeridorn Redleaf (captain of the guard), male elf War5; Jilsef Cofferly (moneychanger), female human Exp3; Thulla Axebiter (proprietor of the Darkmantle Inn), female half-orc Ftr3/Rog3.

Others: As determined by the DM.

At the Gates of Dorr

The PCs have just arrived at the gates of Dorr and are waiting in line to pay the gate tax of 1 sp per person to enter the town. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

> The line to enter the city is particularly long today, and the summer sun stays hot even as dusk approaches. Suddenly, several people begin shouting toward the front of the line, and a small figure in a dirty, green cloak darts away from the city gate with a huffing guard in hot pursuit. The small figure cries out "Please help! Please help!" in accented Common as it keeps ahead of the guard. With a final, desperate lunge, the guard gets a handful of the green cloak, but his look of triumph is fleeting as he trips on a rock, allowing his quarry to wriggle out of its cloak and escape. Murmurs of amazement ripple up and down the line over the fleeing form, which is revealed as a kobold. The creature is clearly uncomfortable in the waning sunlight but slowly repeats its plea for help as it backs away from the fallen guard.
>
> The guard struggles to his feet and throws the cloak to the ground. He then stabs his finger in the direction of the kobold and growls, "Your kind ain't allowed in here! Now

scram, or we'll cook ya!" The guard advances a step and the kobold scurries off down the Queen's Highway. The guard casts one last scowl after the retreating kobold and returns to his post, enduring the mocking cheers of his comrades.

The PCs can follow the kobold or wait to see if it returns, which it eventually does. Either way, if the PCs wish to talk to the kobold, one of them must make a successful Charisma or Diplomacy check (DC 15). Award a +2 circumstance bonus to the check for each of the following conditions:

- the PC approaches without weapons;
- the PC has recovered the kobold's cloak;
- the PC speaks to the kobold in Draconic or Dwarven.

If the PCs ignore the kobold, it remains near the city for five days before leaving to find food and a more receptive community.

The kobold, Akara, knows only a few words of Common, so the PC must speak in Draconic or Dwarven if they wish to get any meaningful information. If questioned in a language it understands, the kobold responds as follows:

"Akara's people are in trouble, and he needs your help to free them. Akara has searched long and his hope is becoming small. Can you help Akara?"

If asked who Akara is, the kobold points to himself. If asked what kind of trouble his people are in, Akara says that "lizards" are making them dig in a mountain. If asked where the mountain is, Akara points in the direction of the Vision Peaks and adds, "Six suns that way." If asked about a reward, Akara nods in the affirmative and says there is gold in the mountain, even though he has no idea whether his people would reward any of it to their rescuers or not.

Creature (EL 1): Although trained to fight, Akara avoids combat and flees at the first sign of trouble.

If the PCs befriend Akara, award them experience points as if they had defeated him in combat.

Akara, Male Kobold Ftr1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (Reptilian) (3 ft. tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 11; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk -1 melee (1d4-2, dagger); or +4 ranged (1d4, sling); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 6, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +1, Craft (trapmaking) +3*, Hide +6 (includes Skill Focus feat), Jump +0, Listen +0, Profession (mining) +1*, Search +3*, Swim +1. *Feats:* Dodge, Skill Focus (Hide). * As a kobold, Akara gets a +2 racial bonus to Craft (trapmaking), Profession (mining), and Search skill checks. These are already factored into the skill bonuses above.

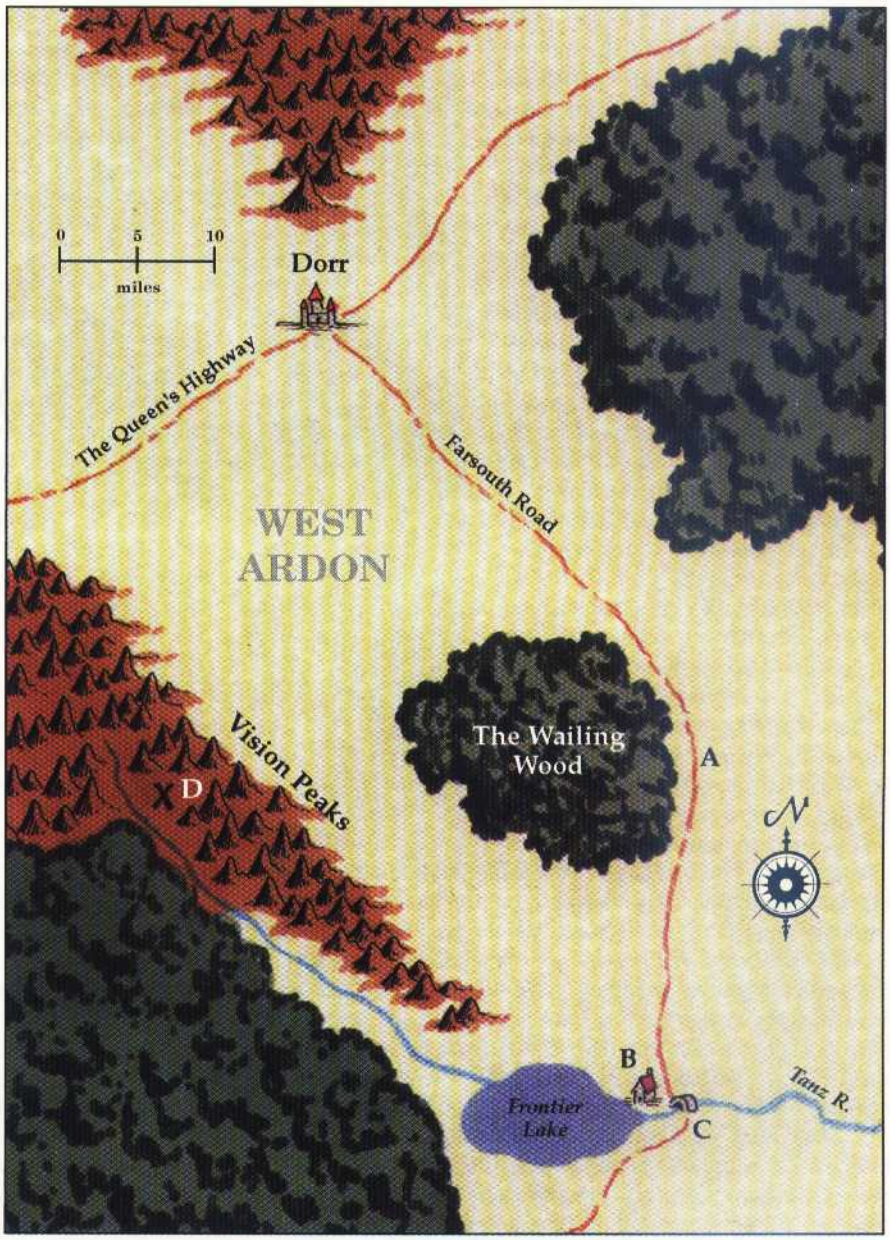
Possessions: Ragged green cloak, dagger, sling with 6 bullets.

Wilderness Encounters

The following encounters are keyed to the map below.

A. Ambush at the Wailing Wood. The Wailing Wood gets its name from the sound of the wind sweeping through the trees as it crosses the plains of West Ardon. Normally nothing more than a landmark for travelers on the Farsouth Road, the woods have recently become the base for a small group of bandits led by a half-elf fighter named Krista Ferns.

If any combat occurs, Akara makes for the woods and hides for the duration of the battle. If the PCs are hard-pressed, the kobold can use his sling to attack bandits from a safe distance.



Creatures (EL 5): The bandits usually attack lone merchants heading north to Dorr and steal their goods. The goods are then sold through agents in Dorr, providing a nice profit. In some cases, though, the bandits attack other small groups to hone their fighting skills and procure new equipment. The bandits' **Tactics** (described below) are well rehearsed.

Krista Ferns was once a sergeant-of-the-guard in a city to the south, but that life of order and discipline grew tiresome, so she quit her post and headed north. She killed the bandits' former leader during his attempt to rob her, and she has come to like the free and mostly easy life. She carries the bandits' **Treasure** (described below).

The four bandits riding horseback are humans; the three archers hiding in the nearby brush are half-elves.

Bandits Riders, Male Humans Com1 (4): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 large shield); Atk +0 melee (1d6/crit 19-20, short sword); or +0 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger); or +0 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +3 (includes Skill Focus feat), Listen +1, Ride +3, Spot +2. *Feats:* Mounted Combat, Skill Focus (Hide).

Possessions: Leather armor, large wooden shield, short sword, dagger, light crossbow with 12 bolts, 2d6 gp and 1d6 sp in pouch.

Bandit Archers, Male Half-elves Com1 (3): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor), 20 (with three-quarters cover); Atk +0 melee (1d6/crit 19-20, short sword); or +1 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ immune to *sleep* spells, +2 racial bonus to Enchantment spells and effects, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 10.

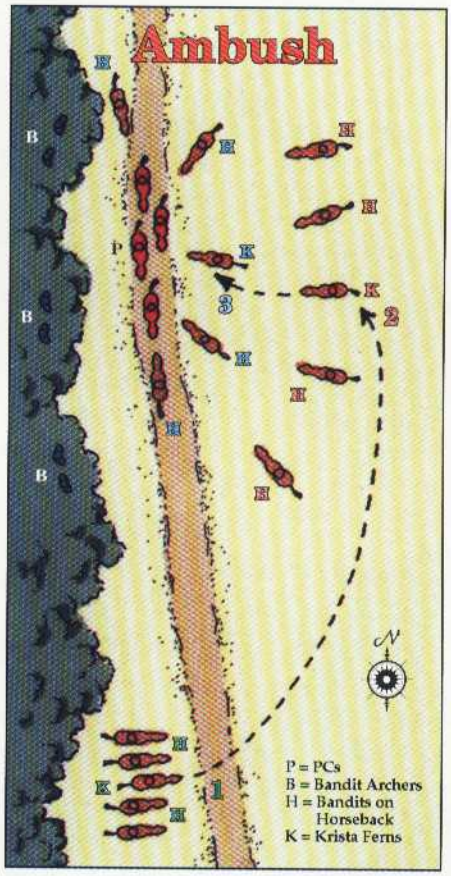
Skills: Climb +2, Hide +4 (includes Skill Focus feat), Listen +2, Search +2, Spot +1. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Hide).

Possessions: Leather armor, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, 2d6 gp and 1d6 sp in pouch.

Krista Ferns, Female Half-elf Ftr2: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 11 in. tall); HD 2d10+1 (includes Toughness feat); hp 17; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather armor), 16 (with Dodge feat); Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace with Weapon Focus feat); or +3 melee (1d4+1/crit 19-20, dagger); SQ immune to *sleep* spells, +2 racial bonus to Enchantment spells and effects, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +4, Listen +1, Ride +4, Spot +2. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, heavy mace, dagger, *bag of holding* containing the **Treasure** (see below).



Light Warhorses (5): hp 22 each; see *Monster Manual* 197 for complete statistics. Each horse is equipped with a bit and bridle, riding saddle, and saddle bags.

Tactics: Krista Ferns and her four bandit riders sit astride their light warhorses by the roadside (position 1 on the "Ambush" map). If the PCs are exceptionally well-equipped, Krista lets them pass without trouble. If, however, the PCs seem manageable, the bandits on horses ride across the road (to position 2 on the map) using a double move while the three archers in the woods open fire. The archers have three-quarters concealment (30% miss chance), and Spot checks to detect them are opposed by the bandits' Hide checks. The archers continue to fire as the bandit riders move in to attack the PCs the following round (position 3 on the map). The archers remain in the woods to cover any retreat or pick off PCs avoiding melee combat. The bandit riders attack until two of their number or Krista are taken out of action, at which point they flee to their camp in the woods.

If the PCs pursue the retreating bandits into the forest, the bandits disperse and slowly make their way back to their camp near the center of the woods. If the PCs successfully track the bandits back to their camp, the bandits defend the camp until half their number have fallen, after which it is "every man for himself." There are eleven additional bandits in the camp—four half-elves and seven humans—and three more horses.

Treasure: Krista Ferns carries the bandits' treasure consisting of 520 cp, 450 sp, 190 gp, four small opals (10 gp each) in a drawstring pouch, and a metal scroll tube. The scroll tube contains a letter with an official-looking seal stating that the bearer is in the lawful service of the Lord of West Ardon and is not to be hindered from completing her task. The letter and the seal are forgeries, but they are expertly made. A successful Forgery check (DC 20) reveals them as clever fakes. Krista paid a lot for the letter and tries to use the letter as her way out if she is captured, claiming she thought the PCs were bandits.

The bandit horses are well cared for and bring full price if sold in Dorr, but their equipment is in poor condition and worth only 25% of the standard price.

Development: If the PCs attack the bandit camp, any surviving bandits regroup and return to the woods the next day. If Krista is killed, the bandits cease their activities for 2d4 days so that a new leader can be chosen.

B. Ruoyna's Den. Ruoyna's (ru-oy-nahs) Den consists of a tavern and stables, both made of wood with thatched roofs. The buildings are quite old but in good repair. The tavern attracts travelers along the Farsouth Road as well as patrolling soldiers in need of a break from their own cooking.

The tavern is open for business from first light until the last evening meal is served. There are 1d4+1 travelers (1st-level

human commoners) in the tavern at meal times, and there is a 50% chance that there are 1d6+4 soldiers (2nd-level warriors equipped with scale mail, longswords, and small steel shields) as well. There are no rooms in the tavern, but travelers are allowed to sleep in the dining area after the tavern closes.

Creatures (EL 1 for Harry, EL 1 for Greta): The proprietor of Ruoyna's Den is a big, hairy man with a thick black beard called Bear. He is clad in simple clothing and a well-used white apron. He makes it a point to greet everyone at the door, scrutinizing all strangers carefully and using his paladin ability to *detect evil* if he feels the situation warrants it. If the PCs are courteous, he introduces himself and bids them a cheerful welcome to his tavern. No one, Akara included, is refused entry to Ruoyna's Den, but suspicious types are watched carefully. If the PCs take offense to Bear's scrutiny and become hostile, he demands that they leave. If the PCs attack Bear, he fights to subdue with his fists until reduced to 25% of his hit points, at which point he goes for his sword and his potions.

The bandits of Wailing Wood always have a spy among the tavern patrons. The spy watches for worthy targets and then rides to alert Krista. The first time the PCs come here, the spy is a young man named Harry Westbrook, and when they pass through again the spy is a half-orc named Greta Longjaw. In either case, if the PCs are not careful to keep their affairs secret, there is a good chance that the spy decides they are worth keeping an eye on. If Greta is specifically waiting for the PCs to return, she gets her horse and rides off as soon as she spots the PCs.

"Bear," Male Human Pal5 (Heironeous): CR 5; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 5d10+15; hp 50; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (-1 Dex, *+2 ring of protection*); Atk +8 melee (1d3+3 subdual, unarmed strike); or +10 melee (2d6+4/crit 19-20, *+1 greatsword* with Weapon Focus feat); SA smite evil 1/day (+3 to attack, +5 damage), turn undead 6/day; SQ *detect evil, lay on hands* (21 hp/day), divine health, aura of courage, *remove disease* 1/week; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills: Diplomacy +11, Heal +8, Listen +5 (includes Alertness feat), Profession (tavern keeper) +8, Ride +3, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Spell (1): 1st—*protection from evil.*

Possessions: Half-plate (in quarters), *+2 ring of protection, +1 greatsword* (behind bar), two *potions of cure moderate wounds* (in quarters), 512 gp in assorted coins and gems (in quarters).

Notes: Bear's real name is Edward Swanblade. He is glad to talk to the PCs but prefers to talk where he can keep an eye on things. If asked about kobolds and the "lizards" mentioned by Akara, Bear replies that he has heard nothing of any kobolds or lizardfolk in the area. Bear knows of the dwarven mine because the dwarves occasionally buy supplies from him, but he has never been there and has no idea whether the dwarves use kobolds as labor in the mine. If asked when he last saw the dwarves, Bear thinks a moment before saying, "You know, it *has* been a while."

Harry Westbrook, Male Human Rog1: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d6-1; hp 3; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather armor), 15 (with Dodge feat); Atk +1 melee (1d4+1/crit 19-20, dagger); SA sneak attack (+1d6); AL CN; SV Fort -1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Open Locks +5, Pick Pockets +7, Read Lips +7 (includes Skill Focus), Search +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Dodge, Skill Focus (Read Lips).

Possessions: Leather armor, three daggers, 6 sp in pouch.

Notes: Harry has an unrealistic view of his abilities, believing there is no situation he can't handle. When the PCs enter, he invites them to join him for a drink. If the PCs accept, he questions them openly about their adventures, acting like their biggest fan. If the PCs refuse his offer, he resorts to listening and reading lips to get the information.

Greta Longjaw, Female Half-orc Rog1: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 7; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, club); or +1 ranged (1d4+1/crit 19-20, thrown dagger); SA sneak attack (+1d6); AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 6, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +6 (includes Skill Focus), Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Open Locks +3, Pick Pockets +5, Ride +4, Search +4, Spot +2. *Feat:* Skill Focus (Hide).

Possessions: Leather armor, club, dagger, 18 sp in pouch.

Notes: Greta is an attractive half-orc but still very sensitive about the effect her mixed heritage has on others. If there are more than six patrons in the tavern when she is on spy duty, she is uncomfortable to the point that she must make all checks at a -2 penalty. If the PCs approach her for any reason, she panics and flees the tavern.

Development: After the PCs speak with Bear, they might have additional questions for Akara. If asked specifically about the dwarves, Akara refers to them as "my people." If asked if there are kobolds in the mine, Akara nods but refers to them only as "the miners."

Bear declines any offer to accompany the PCs on their mission but aids them with healing if they need it upon returning to the tavern during or after the adventure.

If Harry discovers that the PCs are headed to the dwarven mine, he tells Krista upon his return to the Wailing Wood. Krista then has her spies watch both the bridge (area **C**) and the tavern for the PCs' return.

C. Arpyn's Ford. An arched wooden bridge was built across the Tanz River three years ago. Travelers can bypass the bridge, as the river is only about 2 feet deep nearby, but the bridge is clearly the easier route. The bridge is not guarded, but patrols of soldiers from West Ardon make daily visits to the ford. Those foolish enough to damage the bridge are dealt with harshly if caught by a patrol. At night the bridge is lit up by lanterns placed by Bear.

D. Dwarven Copper Mine. There are two ways into the mine: the main entrance (area **19**) and a concealed passage that leads to a system of caves under the main mine (area 1). The concealed passage is more discrete, but the PCs must find it first.

Akara knows about the concealed passage because he used to watch as the dwarves carried out their yearly inspection of the iron grate sealing it off, but he does not mention it unless the PCs ask about a less conspicuous entrance. If the PCs are having trouble deciding how to proceed, Akara might mention the existence of the concealed passage.

The main entrance consists of a thick wooden wall, in which has been set a pair of large doors. Over each door is a 1-foot-diameter circular opening set with horizontal slats of wood to

form louvers. The area over the right door is emitting a slight smoky haze. The area over the left door emits nothing. A 15-foot-deep chasm and the fast running stream that carved it run just in front of the doors.

The 20-foot-wide wooden bridge that once spanned the chasm now lies at its bottom. The damage to the bridge is obviously recent and deliberate. If the PCs want to use the main entrance, they must first get across the river and then either bypass the doors magically or hack a hole in one of them. The doors are made of standard ironbound wood (hardness 5, hp 50 each). For more details on the main entrance, refer to the description of area **19**.

The concealed entrance to the caves is located beneath the level of the stream, just west of the main entrance. It is noticeable from the edge of the chasm by the eddy that is formed as the stream flows past the tunnel entrance. Noticing the eddy requires a successful Spot check (DC 15) or, if the PCs attempt a closer inspection, Search check (DC 15). PCs can "take 10" on this check but cannot "take 20" unless they are actually down in the river.

Cave Level (Areas 1-16)

All of the rooms on this level are roughly hewn and unlit unless stated otherwise.

1. Concealed Passage. It was through this passage into the lower caves that the mine was originally discovered. To get to the entrance of the concealed passage, the PCs must first descend the walls of the chasm to the level of the river 15 feet below. The walls of the chasm have many natural handholds and the slope is not quite vertical, so the climb has a DC of 15.

The entrance of the concealed passage is blocked by a rusty, 3-foot-diameter, circular grate that is riveted shut. The grate can be forced open with a sucessful Strength check (DC 21), or the latch can be smashed (Hardness 5, hp 5) with a weapon. Weapon damage inflicted on the latch is halved due to the fact that it is below the surface of the stream. Anyone swinging a weapon while standing in the stream must make a successful Balance check (DC 15) or slip and be carried away by the stream. PCs falling into or swept away by the stream tumble along with the stream for several hundred feet, taking 2d6 points of subdual damage before catching hold of a rock or tree root.

The first 20 feet of the passage is filled with water. It walls were widened and smoothed by the dwarves, who also added rough steps to make bringing sacks of ore out through the partially submerged passage easier. After the steps, the passage continues to slope up toward its northern end, which is about 5 feet above the level of the stream.

2. Entry Cave.

Natural cave formations clutter the ceiling and floor of this cave, and a thin sheen of water glistens on every surface. The only exits from the cave are the passage to the south and a natural chimney that descends into darkness in the eastern section of the cave floor. The rotted remains of a large winch are still in place over the mineshaft.

If the PCs put even the slightest amount of weight on the winch, it collapses and falls through the chimney to the floor of the cave below. The chimney descends 10 feet to the ceiling of area **3**. Its walls are rough but slick, and descending the chimney without spelunking gear requires a successful Climb check (DC 30). If the PCs use a rope, they find this climb much easier (DC 15).

Development: If the winch falls through the chimney, all five giant fire beetles from area **4** rush into area **3** and attack anything that moves. They remain agitated for 5 minutes, after which they return to the nest.

3. Fire Beetle Graveyard.

The ceiling of this cave rises to 20 feet where the natural chimney enters from above. Water drips steadily from the cave formations above onto those on the floor. An unidentifiable, wet mass lies near the mouth of the north tunnel.

A PC who spends a few minutes studying the floor formations notices that many have been broken off.

Clustered around the north tunnel are the gutted carcasses of two large fire beetles. The carapaces have been stripped from their backs, and the "meat" has been removed by the kobolds in area **9**.

Development: Shortly after all the PCs have entered this cave, one of the giant fire beetles from area **4** enters with the intention of finding a meal among the carcasses. If left alone, it is content to feed on the unresisting carcasses, but if the PC come too close or try to get past it and into area **4**, it attacks. Combat with the beetle brings the rest of the giant fire beetles to its aid the following round.

4. Fire Beetle Nest. The 4-foot-high ceiling and the scarcity of natural formations make this cave a perfect nest for a colony of giant fire beetles driven out of the upper caves by the dwarves. Due to the low ceiling, creatures over 4 feet tall suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class while fighting in this cave.

At the back of the cave sits a pile of half-eaten, diminutive humanoid corpses, that Akara can identify as kobolds, as well as one beetle carcass. The kobold corpses are incubating several fire beetle eggs, and the PCs should be awarded 100 XP for destroying them.

Creatures (EL 2): There are five giant fire beetles in the nest when the PCs enter. The giant fire beetles attack with single-minded ferocity.

Giant Fire Beetles (5): hp 6, 5, 4 (×2), 2; see *Monster Manual* 206 for complete statistics.

5. Water Cave. The floor of this cave is some 10-15 feet below the rest of the caves on this level, and as a result, has filled up with water. The ceiling of the cave rises 10 feet above the water's level, and the pool is 15 feet deep. The water is calm, so Swim checks are made against DC 10.

Two small boats made from beetle carapaces are pulled up in the north passage. Each boat can hold up to 150 lbs. without sinking. Hanging onto one of the boats while swimming across the cave grants a +2 bonus to all Swim checks.

Development: PCs making a lot of noise traversing the cave or using bright lights alert the kobolds in area **6**, who come to investigate in 1 round.

6. Sentry Cave.

A path has been cleared through the rock formations on the floor of this cave, and there is evidence of mining along the east wall. The ceiling height is fairly uniform at 8 feet.

A PC with the Craft (stonemasonry) or Profession (miner) skill or comparable racial ability can tell that the mining was done many years ago.

Creatures (EL 1): This cavern is currently occupied by four kobolds with clubs and crude bucklers made from fire beetle carapace.

Kobolds (4): AC 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 buckler); hp 3, 3, 2, 2; see *Monster Manual* 123 for full statistics.

Tactics: These kobolds check on any noise or light coming from area 5. If they detect more than one intruder, they retreat to area 9; otherwise they hide in ambush among the natural rock formations and attack when the lone intruder enters the cave.

7. Boulder Cave. This cave has a rough, uneven floor that slopes down toward the cave's northeast end. A path connecting the two tunnels that enter the cave has been cleared of rock formations. The northern exit is not obvious upon first glance because of the large boulder partially blocking it. Noticing it from the south end of the room requires a successful Spot check (DC 15).

In the west corner of the cave is a dwarf-made, 10-foot-deep pit left over from a prospecting effort. The pit contains kobold refuse and gives off a charnel stench.

The boulder blocking the north exit fell from the ceiling some time after the lower caves were abandoned by the dwarves. The kobolds have created a kobold-sized gap between the boulder and the cave wall that allows them to slip by at the rate of five kobolds per round. The boulder is heavy, and moving it requires a successful Strength check (DC 25). A maximum of three PCs can combine forces to move the boulder, with the strongest PC being considered as the leader and the others giving him a +2 bonus if their Strength checks (DC 10) are successful. The PCs cannot "take 10" on this task, but they can make multiple tries. Trying repeatedly to move a heavy object is tiring, and this fatigue results in a -1 cumulative penalty to the PCs' checks for every try after the first. Resting for 30 minutes resets the fatigue penalty to zero.

Creatures (EL 2): If the kobold sentries from area 6 have alerted the tribe, Chief Ukri and ten kobold warriors from area 8 are hiding with them among the stalagmites; otherwise the cave is empty. The chief continues the fight as described in area 9 until four of his warriors have fallen, at which point he orders a retreat past the boulder.

Development: Moving the boulder alerts the kobolds in area 8. Chief Ukri sends ten kobold warriors to investigate. They pull back to area 9 if confronted by multiple intruders.

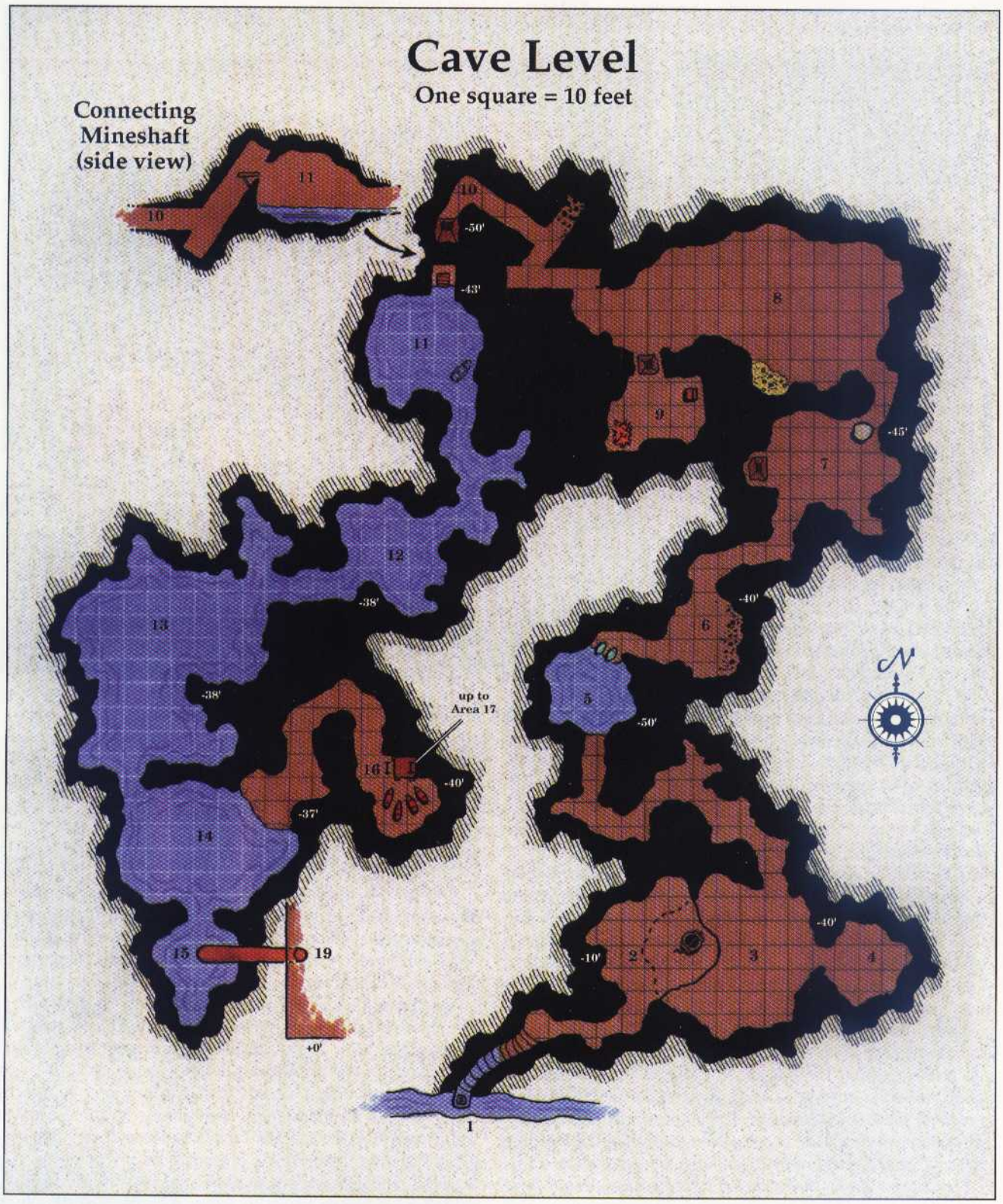
8. Kobold Tribal Lair.

The ceiling of this cave is 15 feet high, and the floor is clear of natural formations. There is evidence of mining all along the cave's north wall, and a smooth mining tunnel exits the cave to the northwest. Clustered together atop a patch of green fungus to the south are several mottled-yellow eggs.

This cave is inhabited by fifteen kobolds (male and female). They were exiled here by the dwarves for refusing to work or causing trouble. The tribe's future—a clutch of eighteen small eggs—incubates on the patch of harmless green fungus in a southern nook of the cave.

Creatures (EL 4): By the time the PCs get past the boulder, all remaining kobolds are ready to attack the PCs *en masse*. If the tribe has been alerted, Chief Ukri is present as well. Half of the kobolds are armed with crude wooden clubs; the rest use their teeth. Those kobolds forced to rely on bite attacks suffer attacks of opportunity when closing into melee range with armed PCs. The kobold's **Tactics** (see below) vary depending on whether Chief Ukri is present. If at any point the PCs threaten to damage the kobolds' eggs, they fly into a rage, gaining a +2 morale bonus to attack rolls but suffering a -2 penalty to their AC.

Chief Ukri, Male Kobold War1/Adp1: CR 1; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 1d8+3 (War plus Toughness feat) plus 1d6 (Adp); hp 13; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural, +3 fire beetle armor); Atk +1 melee (1d6/crit ×3, handaxe); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13.



Skills: Climb +2, Craft (trapmaking) +3, Heal +1, Hide +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (mining) +3, Search +3, Swim +2. *Feat:* Toughness.

Adept Spells (3/1): 0—*guidance* (×2), *mending;* 1st—*sleep.*

Possessions: Fire beetle carapace armor (+3 AC; otherwise treat as chain shirt), handaxe, 8 cp in pouch.

Kobolds (23): hp 4 (×3), 3 (×7), 2 (×8), 1 (×5); AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atk -1 melee (1d4-2, small club); or -1 melee (1, bite); see *Monster Manual* 123 for complete statistics.

Tactics: Regardless of where the kobolds face the PCs, their tactics remain the same. If the kobold chief is not present, the kobolds attack the PCs in a mob and divide themselves equally

among all opponents. They surrender as soon as their numbers are equal to or less than that of their opponents.

If the chief is present to direct the tribe in battle, he shifts his forces around throughout the battle, moving kobolds from weaker opponents to stronger ones. The chief has very little experience with spellcasters and does not target them specifically. If the chief sees that his kobolds outnumber the PCs by more than four to one, he orders them to try to take prisoners using overbearing attacks. Chief Ukri does not enter the fighting until it is obvious that the PCs are losing.

If Akara is visible during the battle, the chief recognizes him as the kobold that caused him to be exiled to the lower caves and decides to eliminate him. The chief directs his four best warriors to attack Akara and divides the rest among the PCs. When Akara has been sufficiently weakened by his warriors, Chief Ukri steps in to finish him off.

The chief has no interest in negotiating with the PCs until the odds in his favor fall below two to one. At this point the chief tries to save the rest of his tribe by granting safe passage through the rest of the kobold caves in exchange for a halt to the fighting. (Ukri speaks Draconic and Dwarven.) If the PCs are particularly strong, Ukri sweetens the deal by offering the potion from the tribe's treasury (area 9). If the PCs reject negotiations and seem bent on destroying the tribe, the chief flees to area 9.

Development: If a PC who speaks Draconic or Dwarven announces before the fighting or during negotiations that the party has come to free the kobolds from their imprisonment, the chief is willing to listen. You can roleplay this encounter or have the PCs make Diplomacy checks (opposed by Ukri's unskilled Sense Motive check) to convince Ukri of their sincerity. If Akara is present during these negotiations, apply a -5 penalty to all of the PCs' Diplomacy checks.

If Akara somehow manages to defeat Ukri, there is a chance he can become the new chief, but he must be coerced into trying. Akara refuses to try unless prodded by the PC who befriended him at Dorr, and even then he must fail an opposed Wisdom check against the PC's Charisma or Diplomacy skill. To become chief, Akara must make a successful Charisma check (DC 15). If the check is successful, Akara becomes the new chief and can direct the kobold tribe as he wishes. If Akara becomes the new chief, the PCs should be awarded 250 XP.

9. Ukri's Cave. The chief's cave is protected by an open pit dug into the floor of the tunnel leading to it (as detailed under **Trap** below). The PCs discover Chief Ukri in his cave only if the tribe has not yet been alerted to the PCs presence.

> The cave is 10 feet high and has been cleared of natural rock formations. The only furnishing are a small nest of dried fungus and twigs that serves as a bed and small chair made of bones tied together with strands of beetle tendon.

Two wooden planks lean against the wall just inside the entrance to the cave.

The tribe's **Treasure** is hidden in a small crack at the back of the cave. Finding the treasure requires a successful Search check (DC 15).

Trap (EL 2): The pit is 10 feet deep and filled with bone spikes. Unless the kobold chief has retreated to the safety of his quarters, a wooden plank spans the pit. The plank is old and can support only 100 pounds before breaking. A PC on the plank when it breaks can catch the edge of the pit with a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 14). If the chief is threatened, he retreats across the pit and kicks the plank down into it. Ukri attacks anyone who crosses the pit but avoids exposing himself to missile fire.

PCs can also try to skirt the edge of the pit, clinging to one of the nearby walls. This requires a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 14) as well.

10-foot-deep Open Spiked Pit: CR 2; 1d6 points of damage plus +5 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 points of damage per successful hit), Reflex save (DC 14) avoids; Search (n/a); Disable Device (n/a).

Treasure: Wedged into a small crack at the back of this cave is the tribe's treasure: 60 cp, 5 gp, a shard of quartz (10 gp), an agate (25 gp), and a vial containing a *potion of alter self* (translucent violet liquid).

10. Early Mine. The only real profit the dwarves made mining the caves came from the tunnels in this area. The ceiling height is a uniform 5 feet, and the walls and ceiling are braced with wooden beams. The short tunnel leading northeast once led to the caves where the dwarves encountered the kobolds. The dwarves later collapsed it to prevent other monsters from wandering into their mine. At the southwestern limit of the mine is a mineshaft that slopes upward at a sharp angle to area 11.

The map on the adjacent page includes a cross-section diagram of this area. The shaft begins 3 feet below the mining tunnel floor and ascends almost 30 feet to a hole where the miners broke through into area 11. The rough walls and slope of the shaft can be ascended with a successful Climb check (base DC 20). Built level with the hole near the top of the shaft is a small wooden platform. The dwarves still use the platform to exile undesirable kobolds to the old mine, so it is well maintained. The slope of the shaft halves falling damage, so someone falling from the platform to the bottom of the shaft suffers only 1d6 points of damage. Despite the slope, many kobolds do not survive their descent into exile, as evidenced by the many small bones that litter the bottom of the shaft.

11. Empty Cave. The hole from the mineshaft into this cave is 12 feet above the surface of the water, which is 5 feet deep. Carved handholds enable one to safely reach the water's surface with a successful Climb check (DC 15). On the cave floor to the southeast is a sunken three-man boat. The boat can be found with a successful Search skill check (DC 12) and can be made to float again if the fist-sized hole in is bottom is patched using an applicable Craft skill (DC 11) or a *mending* spell.

12. Shallow Cave. The water's depth in this cave is just a few inches, and many rock formations break the surface. The ceiling rises to only 5 feet above the water level at the center of the cave.

13. Large Cave. The water in this cavern is 1 foot deep except for a 4-foot-deep trough that runs along the north and west walls and out the south tunnel. The ceiling rises to 8 feet above the water level at the north end of the cave. Negotiating the deeper water of this cave to reach area 14 requires the boat from area 11 or, for Small characters, a successful Swim check (DC 10). Wading through water reduces one's speed by half.

14. Troglodyte Lair. The water depth is 4 feet along the west wall, but it diminishes steadily as the cave floor rises toward the northeast, where it is actually slightly above water. The ceiling height rises from 8 feet in the south end to 15 feet over the dry area. PCs fighting in water or in a boat suffer a -2 penalty to attacks and AC and must make a Dexterity check (C 10) each time they roll a natural "1" in combat or fall into the water.

Da'treaal has allowed the troglodytes to lair in the caves because they prefer the wetter living conditions. The dry area is littered with broken bones and rotting meat.

Creatures (EL 2): A lone troglodyte, Ryl, sits in quiet meditation near the center of the dry area next to a stack of ten barbed javelins. Ryl admires Da'Treaal and mimics the drow priest to the point of adopting his prefered weapon (light mace) and attempting to pray to Lolth for spells. Lolth has not yet answered his prayers, but Ryl feels that when his Drowic improves beyond a few prayers and battle cries, she is sure to respond. Da'treaal encourages Ryl's behavior, as it ensures loyalty. The drow has given Ryl his old light mace as a reward for his efforts.

Ryl has two pet flying lizards that perch on his shoulders.

Ryl, Male Troglodyte Ftr1: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (Reptilian) (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 2d8+4 (troglodyte) plus 1d10+5 (Ftr and Toughness feat); hp 26; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (-1 Dex, +6 natural, +4 chain shirt); Atk +3 ranged (1d6, javelin with Weapon Focus feat); or +4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork light mace); or +3 melee (1d4+1, claws), +1 melee (1d4, bite); SQ stench, darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +6 (+14 in caves), Listen +3. *Feats:* Multi-Attack, Weapon Focus (javelin), Toughness.

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork light mace.

Flying Lizards (2): CR 1/6; Tiny Animal (18 in. long); HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); AC 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA leap (see **Tactics** below); Face 2 1/2 ft. × 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +13, Listen +4, Spot +4. *Feat:* Weapon Finesse (bite).

Tactics: When Ryl becomes aware of the PCs, he grabs javelins from the pile and throws them at PCs until forced into melee combat. In melee, Ryl fights with his masterwork light mace while his flying lizards aid him by leaping on to the faces of his attackers. Ryl's service to Da'treaal is a matter of pride, and he fights to the death. The PCs get no information out of him even under threat of death. Magic compulsion reveals only that he admires Da'treaal and aspires to serve Lolth in some greater capacity.

A lizard's leap attack deals no damage but is treated as a melee touch attack and, if successful, effectively blinds the victim (as the *blindness* spell) until the lizard is removed. If the attack fails, the lizard glides back around to the ground behind Ryl and climbs back up for another attempt the following round. Removing the lizard in combat requires the PC to make a successful grapple attack and then win an opposed Strength check to tear the lizard free. Removing the lizard causes 1d4 points of damage to a PC not wearing a full-face helmet. If Ryl is killed, the lizards attempt to flee and hide.

Development: Ironhide, the female troglodyte in area 19, sends her three troglodyte subordinates to check on Ryl 1d4 hours after the PCs arrive here. If they reach this area and find Ryl slain or missing, one of them remains here while the two others return to area 19 to report. If they encounter the PCs, they attack on sight.

15. Water-filled Cave. This cave is approximately 6 feet high and is completely submerged. PCs searching the cave floor have a chance to discover the **Treasure.** PCs searching along the ceiling of the cave who make a successful Search check (DC 12) locate a 2-foot-diameter shaft that rises up at a 45-degree angle toward the east. Only the first few inches of the shaft are filled with water, and there is enough room for one PC to surface within it.

The shaft runs between areas 15 and 19 as shown on Diagram 2 and the map of the Mine Level. The top of the shaft cannot be seen, even with a *daylight* spell, as it is over 50 feet long. A 6-inch-diameter, hard leather tube runs upward along the bottom of the shaft and disappears into the darkness at the top of the shaft. Inside the tube is a wooden screw that appears to run the length of the tube. The screw is not in motion. The shaft and the screw are part of a pump that is fully described in area 19. PCs wishing to climb the shaft do so; this requires a successful Climb check (DC 15).

Treasure: A successful Spot check (DC 12) reveals a dwarven skeleton in rusty chainmail on the floor of this cave. A successful Search check in the area around the skeleton (DC 17) turns up the dead dwarf's *+1 handaxe.*

16. Dry Cave. A vertical mineshaft in the north portion of the cave ascends 40 feet to area 17. A 4-foot-high wooden platform has been built under the shaft, and a wooden ladder has been mounted to its eastern wall. The platform was built provide a dry area for the launching of boats should the cave ever flood. Four three-man boats are connected to the platform by thin ropes. The boats are stored hull down so that they automatically float as the cave fills with water.

PCs climbing the ladder discover that the top of the mineshaft has been closed off with a heavy, wooden cover. A successful Strength check (DC 11) is necessary to open the cover from underneath.

Mine Level (Areas 17-27)

All areas within the mine have rough-hewn rock walls and 6-foot-high ceilings except where noted. PCs taller than the ceiling height of a hall or chamber fight with a -1 penalty to their attack rolls. Most tunnels and chambers are not illuminated; exceptions are noted in the text.

Suspended from the ceiling in some of the tunnels and chambers are lines of leather ductwork. These ducts are 1-foot-diameter, soft leather tubes that keep their shape by means of wooden hoops sewn into the leather at 2-foot intervals. The ductwork is suspended near the ceiling by ropes connected between each of the hoops and a metal spike driven into the stone above. One line follows the route between areas 19 and 21, and the other follows the route between areas 19 and 25. PCs opening a hole in the ductwork running between areas 19 and 21 can feel air being drawn into the line. PCs opening a hole in the other line feel fresh air blowing out of it. The lines of ductwork supply exhaust suction and fresh air respectively to all the deeper areas of the mine level and are fed by equipment in area 19.

Running along the route from areas **21** to **25** is a system of narrow wooden rails. These rails and the wooden mining carts found in rooms along the route were used by the dwarves to transport earth to area **23** and copper ore to area **21**.

Creatures (EL 1): PCs have a 1-in-6 chance of encountering one of two work gangs—each consisting of a troglodyte, three kobolds, and two dwarven miners—in any empty tunnel or chamber along the most direct route between areas **19** and **26**. There are no more random encounters once both work gangs have been encountered and dealt with.

The troglodyte supervisor attacks while the kobolds run for the nearest set of reinforcements. If the troglodyte is killed and the kobolds are prevented from escaping, they surrender. Captured kobolds always answer "too many" when questioned about the numbers of troglodytes or kobolds in the mine but can lead the PCs to the dwarven prisoners.

The dwarves are manacled (-2 penalty to attacks, 50% penalty to speed), but this does not stop them from attacking their captors with their fists if they encounter an armed friendly force. The dwarves carry large sacks that have a 50% chance of being filled with rocks. If their sacks are full, the dwarves can use them as weapons.

Troglodyte (1): hp 13; see *Monster Manual* 179 for complete statistics.

Kobolds (3): hp 2 each; see *Monster Manual* 123 for complete statistics.

Captured Miners, Male Dwarves Exp2 (2): CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (4 ft. tall); HD 2d6+2; hp 10 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (10 ft. in manacles); AC 9 (-1 Dex); Atk +2 melee [+0 melee with manacles] (1d6+1, sack of rocks); or +2 melee [+0 melee with manacles] (1d3+1 subdual, unarmed strike); SQ dark-vision 60 ft., +2 racial bonus to saves against poison, spells, and spell-like effects; AL LG; SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +4 (+6 for rare and exotic items), Balance +2, Climb +4, Craft (stonemasonry) +6, Disable Device +2, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +3, Listen +3, Profession (mining) +5, Search +2, Spot +2. *Feat:* Skill Focus—Profession (mining).

17. Unused Winch Room. The wooden framework, drum, and crank handles of a large winch are still in place over the mineshaft, which has been closed off with a heavy, wooden cover. A successful Strength check (DC 11) is required to open the wooden cover from underneath.

18. Storeroom. This chamber contains two groups of Medium-size wooden barrels separated by a narrow aisle. Four barrels have been dragged into the aisle and broken open. Two of the open barrels contain dried vegetables, one contains dried fruit, and the last holds water.

In all, there are twenty-four barrels in the south portion of the chamber and nineteen in the north portion. Of the barrels to the south, 13 contain dried vegetables, seven contain dried fruit, and four contain salted meat. Of the barrels to the north, seven contain water, ten contain beer, and two contain a good wine. These barrels represent all that is left of the dwarves' once formidable food stockpile, soon to be reduced to crumbs by the voracious troglodytes.

19. Entry Hall. This hall was created by the dwarves to make the mine more accessible from the outside. The ceiling is 10 feet high, and the walls have been finished to a smooth surface.

The large double doors to the south are secured with a heavy wooden bar rigged to a system of pulleys that allows it to be removed by a single creature in 2 rounds. The doors have been reinforced by the placement of two dozen wooden barrels, identical to those found in area **18**. The barrels are filled with earth and rock. Thirteen additional, empty barrels stand in front of the full ones. Moving enough barrels to open one of the doors takes one person 80 rounds (8 minutes).

In the center of the hall are two wooden tables with benches covered with a variety of discarded food and broken dishware. In the northeast corner lies a kitchen area with a preparation table and a large iron kettle. There is a fire under the kettle, the smoke from which is drawn up into a wide leather skirt suspended over it by thick ropes. In the southwest corner of this hall is an 8-foot-diameter, free-standing wooden wheel hooked up by a network of leather belts to three other pieces of odd-looking equipment located throughout the hall.

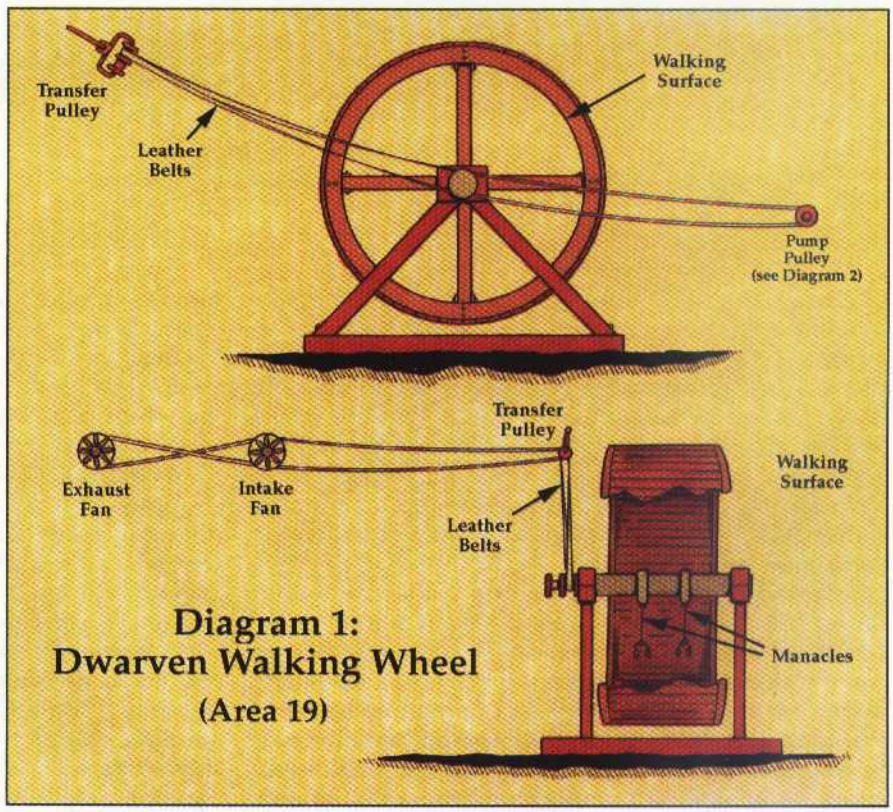
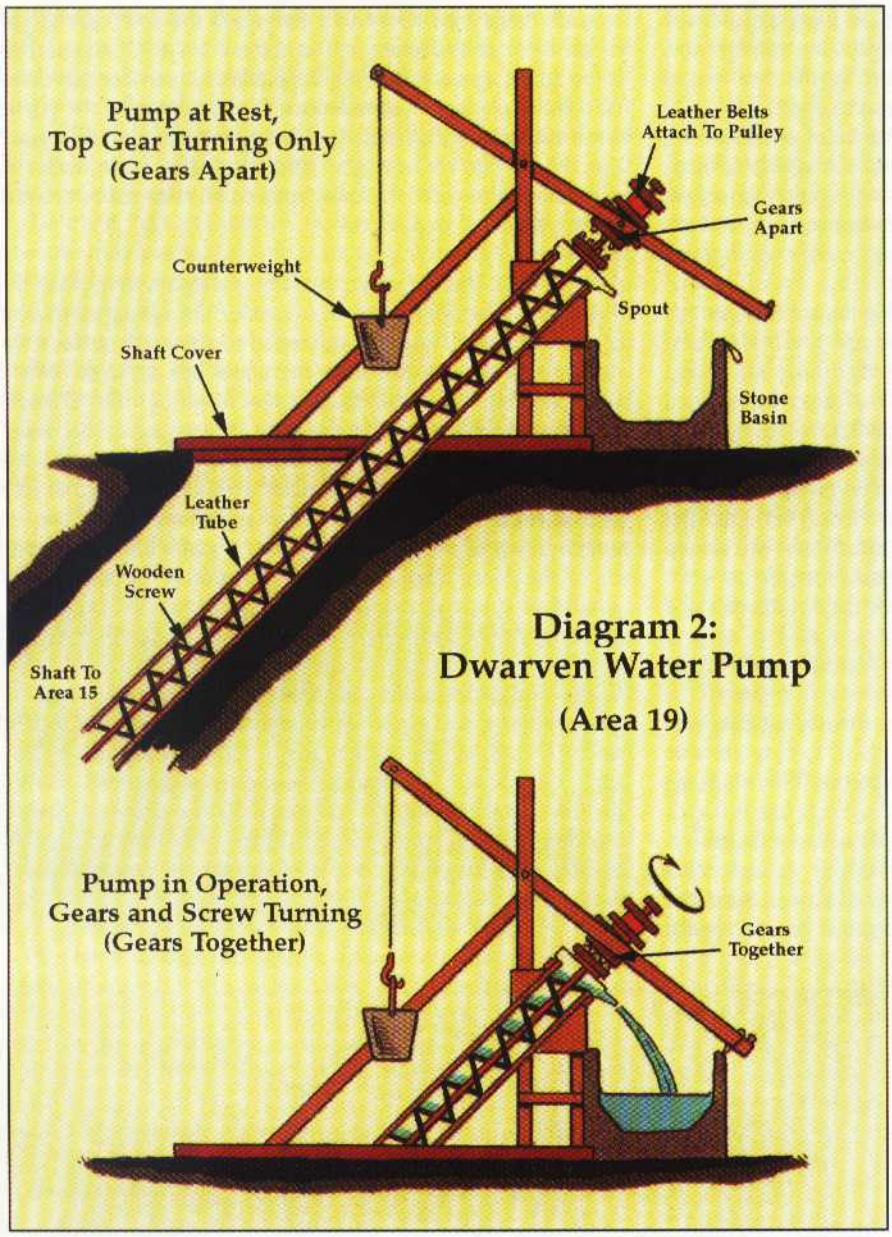


Diagram 1: Dwarven Walking Wheel (Area 19)



The wooden wheel is similar in appearance to the water wheels that drive many gristmills. The water buckets have been replaced by wooden boards to form a walking surface inside the wheel. A creature placed inside the wheel can walk along the boards and cause the wheel to rotate. As the wheel rotates, the belts around the pulley attached to its axle drive the rotating parts of the other equipment. There are two sets of manacles attached to the axle inside the wheel. They are attached to the axle by loose metal rings so that their chains do not wind up on the axle as it turns.

The wooden wheel is heavy and takes considerable strength to get it started, but once it gets moving even a fairly weak creature can keep it going without help. When the dwarves were in charge, the wheel was powered by two kobolds (after a dwarven push-start), but when the PCs enter the hall the job has fallen upon a lone female dwarf named Romae. The dwarf is restrained by one set of the manacles and walks sullenly along the wooden surface until she sees the PCs, at which point she stops and begins shouting in Dwarven for them to release her.

The first two pieces of equipment driven by the wheel are 1-foot-diameter, wooden cylinders with rapidly rotating center sections, from which emanate a whirring sound. Each cylinder is part of a line of leather ductwork that is attached to the area above the main doors and runs out the northern exit. The skirt over the kettle is connected to the eastern line of leather ductwork that begins above the left-hand main door.

Both of the wooden cylinders contain a fan blade that is rotated to move air via the leather ductwork. One of the fans supplies fresh air to the mine, and the other supplies the suction for the exhaust systems suspended over the kettle and smelters in area 21.

The third piece of equipment consists of a pair of wooden gears set on a wooden shaft that extends into a hard leather tube. The leather tube runs down a slanted shaft in the floor that heads toward the west. The gears are held apart by a counterweight, and in this state the leather belt from the wheel rotates only the top gear. A wooden lever allows the top gear to be moved downward, so that its teeth interlock with the teeth of the lower gear. When the gears are together, the shaft in the leather tube rotates. Beneath the lower gear is metal spout that overhangs a carved stone basin the size of a bathtub.

The leather tube contains a wooden screw that, when turned by the wheel, acts as a pump to bring water up from area 15. With the gears meshed, it takes several minutes of operation before water begins to pour out of the spout and into the basin.

Creatures (EL 3): This hall currently serves as a common area for Da'treaal's troglodytes. Four troglodytes are sitting at one of the tables while three kobolds in the kitchen area prepare something in the kettle that smells of rotten meat.

Ironhide, Female Troglodyte Rgr1: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 2d8+4 (troglodyte) plus 1d10+2 (Rgr); hp 20; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d6, club); or +0/+0 melee (1d6, 2 clubs with Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting); or +2 melee (1d4, 2 claws), +0 melee (1d4, bite); SA favored enemy (humans), Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting (in light or no armor); SQ stench, darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +6 (+14 in subterranean conditions), Listen +3, Move Silently +4. *Feats:* Multi-Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (javelin), Weapon Focus (club).

Possessions: Two clubs, wrought iron torc (worthless).

Troglodytes (3): hp 18, 16, 14; see *Monster Manual 179* for full statistics. Each carries two javelins.

Kobolds (3): hp 1 each; see *Monster Manual* 123 for full statistics. They are normally unarmed.

Romae Sigilstone, Female Dwarf War1: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (4 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d10+3; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (15 ft. in armor); AC 10, 15 (+5 chainmail armor); Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 subdual, unarmed strike); or +3 melee (1d8+3/crit ×3, battleaxe); SQ darkvision 60 ft., +2 racial bonus to saves against poison, spells, and spell-like effects; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +1 (includes Iron Will feat); Str 15, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 10.

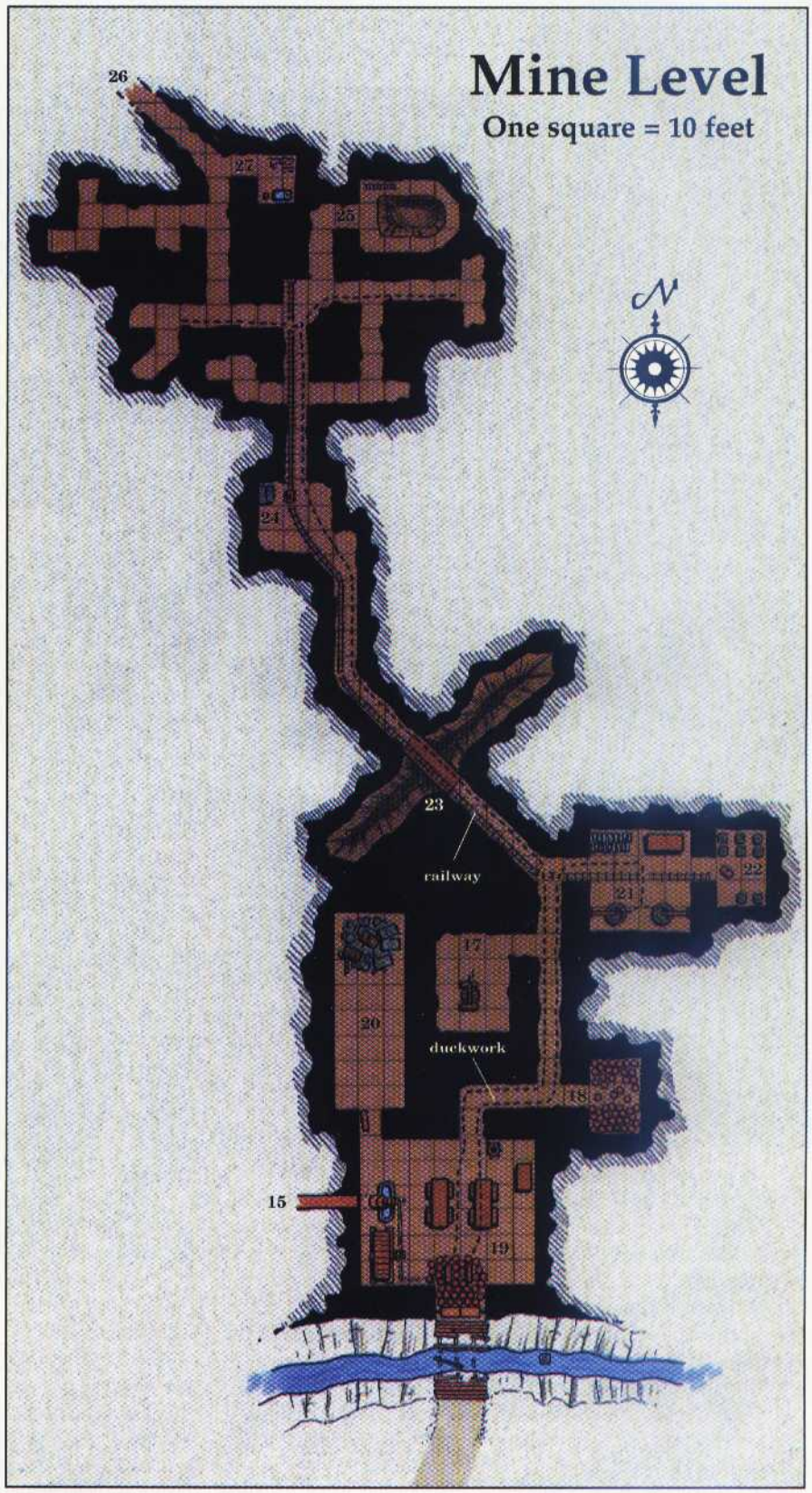
Skills: Climb +3, Intimidate +2, Jump +3. *Feat:* Iron Will.

Romae was the only warrior taken prisoner when the mine was captured. If set free, she joins the attack on the troglodytes, using her fists if a weapon is not available. As soon as the troglodytes have been dealt with, Romae demands that the PCs accompany her to rescue the other dwarves. If the PCs refuse, Romae spends 10 minutes recovering a weapon and armor from the barracks (area **20**) and then storms off into the mine.

Romae has no concern for her own life and charges every enemy she meets. If the PCs are weakened or missing members, they can coerce Romae into cooperating with a successful Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check (DC 15).

Tactics: The troglodytes attack any unaccompanied strangers who enter the hall. This group is led by Ironhide, a troglodyte ranger who serves Da'treaal as a tracker and assassin. If possible, the troglodytes with javelins throw one before entering melee combat. Ironhide uses two clubs in combat, making two attacks every round. Ironhide hates humans above all others and attacks them on sight.

The kobolds do not fight except in self-defense, instead hiding behind the kettle until the PCs leave. If the kobolds are attacked, two of them wield eating knives as weapons (1d3-2 points of damage), and the third uses a big wooden spoon as a two-handed club (1d6-2 points of damage). If offered the chance, the kobolds surrender.



If the PCs assault the main doors to the south, the kobolds are sent to area **26** to alert Da'treaal while the troglodytes overturn tables for one-half cover (+4 cover bonus to AC; +2 cover bonus to Reflex saves) and ready their javelins.

Development: If the PCs spend more than 5 minutes in the hall, one of the work gangs arrives. Upon seeing the PCs or combat in the hall, the dwarves turn on their guards.

If Da'treaal is alerted to an attack on the main hall, he arrives with all the troglodytes and kobolds from areas **24-26** in 1d6+4 rounds.

20. Barracks. The door to what was the dwarves' barracks has been propped open with a piece of wood, and its contents have been moved into one large pile at the north end of the chamber. The walls have been finished to a smooth surface.

Da'treaal's troglodytes used the cleared-out area of the chamber as their quarters until the caves beneath the mine were discovered. The pile of furnishings contains 45 dwarf-sized cots, 12 suits of dwarven leather armor, nine suits of dwarven chainmail, nine light maces, six battleaxes, three large steel shields, two warhammers, and a greataxe. Searching for a specific item requires a successful Search check (DC equal to 15 minus the number of the desired item present). For example, a PC searching for a warhammer would do so against DC 13. "Taking 20" in this search requires 15 minutes.

21. Copper Smelting.

Two iron kettles are suspended over stone hearths along the south wall of this chamber. The kettles hang from elaborate wooden brackets that allow them to be swung away from the hearths and lowered to the floor of the chamber. Over each kettle is a leather skirt attached to a line of leather ductwork that enters the chamber from the east. On a table north of the kettles rest two iron ladles with pour spouts and two moulds for making ingots. A large stack of cut wood occupies a 10-foot by 20-foot area along the north wall.

A set of wooden rails enters the chamber from the main tunnel and terminates in front of the kettles. At the terminus of the rails are two empty, wooden mining carts.

One Medium-size creature or two Small creatures can hide themselves inside a mining cart if they hunch down.

The equipment in this room was used by the dwarves to smelt the copper ore so they could cast it as ingots. The unwanted slag was then dumped in the chasm to the north (area **23**).

22. Dwarven Copper Vault. A thick wooden door has been battered from its hinges and lies on the floor just inside this chamber. The dwarves used this chamber as a vault for the copper ingots that they had produced.

Treasure: There are 430 copper ingots, each worth 100 cp, in the northern portion of the chamber, arranged into stacks of 50 ingots. The stacks are separated by 3-foot-wide aisles that allowed the dwarves to easily check their inventory.

23. Deep Chasm. The dwarves encountered a major deposit of copper-bearing ore here and created this chasm digging it out. The ceiling of the chasm rises 15 feet above the bridge, and its floor lies 20 feet below. A sturdy wooden bridge has been constructed across the chasm so that the dwarves could continue digging to the north. Wooden rails run across the west side of the bridge.

If a light is tossed into the chasm, it falls among a pile of troglodyte and dwarven corpses partially covered with fresh earth and rock. The corpses are the remains of the 28 dwarves and 20 troglodytes killed during Da'treaal's assault on the mine. Some of the dwarven corpses are still clad in chainmail, and an assortment of weapons is visible among the dead.

Development: Akara becomes visibly upset if he sees the dwarven corpses and refuses to leave the bridge. If the PCs wish Akara to continue, his PC friend must make a succesful Charisma or Diplomacy skill check (DC 12).

24. Temporary Copper Storage. If a general alarm has not yet been sounded, PCs hear the sound of metal against stone (like metal ingots being poured onto a stone floor) as they approach within 30 feet of this area.

This chamber has a uniform, 12-foot-high ceiling. A mining cart half-full of shiny, copper ingots sits near the north exit. Two troglodytes are unloading the ingots from the cart and adding them to a pile along the west wall of the chamber.

Da'treaal is using this chamber as a staging area for the copper ingots he is planning to take out through the new tunnel. He has his troglodytes working in shifts to bring the ingots from the dwarven vault (area **22**). The chaotic troglodytes have made just one huge, jumbled pile.

Creatures (EL 2): The troglodytes are making enough noise that they are automatically surprised unless the PCs are carrying a bright light source. If confronted by superior numbers, the troglodytes attempt to retreat down the north tunnel.

Troglodytes (2): hp 17, 12; see *Monster Manual* 179 for complete statistics.

Treasure: There are 124 ingots in the pile, each equivalent to 100 cp. If any of the dwarves from the mine are with the group, they warn the PCs that the ingots belong to them and attack anyone who insists on trying to pocket one of them.

25. The Mines. This network of tunnels is the newest part of the mine, and most of the dead ends show obvious signs of recent work. The chamber at the center of these tunnels was used by the dwarves to hold the kobold miners but now serves as the prison for any dwarves not currently working on the tunnel. The large pit at the chamber's center is 10 feet deep and holds four manacled dwarves lying in exhausted slumber. A 16-foot-long wooden ladder for entering and exiting the pit leans on its side against the wall by the entrance.

Creatures (EL 3): Two troglodytes and seven kobolds have been assigned to watch the dwarves from the ledge circling the pit, but as this chamber also serves as the kobolds' sleeping area, only two of the kobolds are awake.

Troglodytes (2): hp 18, 15; see *Monster Manual* 179 for complete statistics.

Kobolds (7): hp 4, 3 (×2), 2 (×3), 1; see *Monster Manual* 123 for complete statistics.

Tactics: If this group is attacked, the troglodytes hiss to awaken the sleeping kobolds and order them into melee while taking up positions on the far side of the pit. The troglodytes throw javelins at the PCs, trying not to hit the kobolds but not overly concerned if they do. The troglodytes suffer a -4 attack penalty for firing into melee, and kobolds in the line of fire give the PCs the equivalent of one-quarter cover. Rules for striking the cover (that is, the kobolds) instead of a missed target are given on page 133 in the *Player's Handbook*.

If the troglodytes are killed, any remaining kobolds surrender. The sleeping kobolds are automatically surprised.

Development: The dwarves (Exp2; hp 10 each) are manacled to a single long chain and can be freed by breaking the chain (Hardness 10, hp 5) or the individual manacles (Hardness 10, hp 10). Despite their exhaustion, the dwarves gladly ally with the PCs and can guide them to any location in the mine complex. The dwarves arm themselves with whatever they can find, but they are not warriors and avoid fighting unless they are attacked or the PCs are in real trouble.

The dwarves know roughly the placement and numbers of all troglodytes and kobolds. If asked about the troglodytes' leader, the dwarves tell the PCs that there is a dark-skinned elf directing the tunnel project. The dwarves know that the tunnel is being built so their copper can be transported out of the mine, but they do not know exactly where it is leading.

The dwarves are quite pleased with Akara if told that he initiated their rescue.

26. The Tunnel. The noise of digging is clearly discernable at the entrance to the tunnel. The tunnel is 10 feet wide but only 6 feet tall. It measures 210 feet long plus 30 feet for every day the PCs delayed in getting to the mine. When the total length of the tunnel has reached 300 feet, it is complete and the removal of ingots from the mine commences. All of the copper is removed from the mine and the tunnel is collapsed two weeks after the PCs first encounter Akara.

Creatures (EL 5 for Da'treaal, +2 for the troglodytes, +1 for the zombies, +1/2 for the kobolds): At the entrance to the tunnel sits a group of four troglodytes. At the far end of the tunnel dig four dwarven miners (Exp2; hp 10 each), guarded by ten kobolds and two dwarf zombies, all under the direction of the drow cleric Da'treaal. If the PCs use a bright light or flashy spells while fighting the troglodytes, Da'treaal takes notice and begins to prepare for combat. His Tactics rely heavily on his spells.

The troglodytes have been stationed here by Da'treaal in case the dwarves break through into an area containing hostile creatures. The troglodytes are not expecting trouble from the south and remain seated unless alerted by a bright light. If attacked, the troglodytes retreat to the north end of the tunnel to get help from Da'treaal.

The kobolds enjoy the role reversal that Da'treaal has given them, insulting the dwarves and pelting them with small stones as they work. Their courage, however, persists only so long as the dwarves are chained and cannot reach them. If forced to face a superior force alone, the kobolds surrender quickly.

While still quite young, Da'treaal came to covet the power wielded by the female priestesses of Lolth and chose to join their ranks as soon as he came of age. Both his family and the priestesses were furious when he made his intentions public, but he has proved adept at surviving their deadly tests and assassination plots, increasing in power and ability with each trial overcome. Unable to rid themselves of Da'treaal by the normal routes, his family began sending him on slave raids and a variety of high-risk missions. So far Da'treaal has survived, yearning for the day when he rules the House of Achria. Da'treaal is always accompanied by a pair of *animated* dwarf zombies; these shambling mockeries have made the dwarves dreadfully afraid of the drow cleric.

Although this encounter can be deadly to 2nd-level characters, it is likely that the PCs are accompanied by Akara and one or more freed dwarven prisoners. These NPCs can battle the troglodytes and kobolds while the PCs deal with the drow cleric and his zombies.

Da'treaal Achria, Male Drow Clr5 (Lolth): CR 5; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. tall); HD 5d8-5; hp 29; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 chain shirt); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, *+1 light mace*); SA command/rebuke undead, spells and spell-like abilities; SQ immune to *sleep*, darkvision 120 ft., +2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities, light blindness; SR 16; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +5, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +5, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +6.
Feats: Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Draconic, Drow, Dwarven.

Spell-like Abilities (each usable 1/day as Sor5): *dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire.*

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1): 0—*cure minor wounds* (×2), *detect magic, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*cause fear, cure light wounds* (×2), *protection from good*, sanctuary;* 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, desecrate*, hold person, spiritual weapon;* 3rd—*contagion*, prayer, summon monster III.*

* Domain Spells. *Domains:* Destruction (smite good 1/day; +4 to attack, +5 damage), Evil (casts evil spells as Clr6).

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, drowic *+1 light mace*, pouch containing 13 pp, five 50-gp gems, and keys to all padlocks and the dwarves' manacles.

Dwarf Zombies (2): hp 18, 17; see *Monster Manual* 192 for complete statistics. The zombies were created in a *desecrated* area and have better than average hit points.

Troglodytes (4): hp 16, 15, 11 (×2); see *Monster Manual* 179 for complete statistics.

Kobolds (6): hp 3 (×2), 2 (×4); see *Monster Manual* 123 for complete statistics.

Tactics: If he notices fighting at the entrance to the tunnel, Da'treaal positions his zombies in front of him and orders the kobolds to guard the dwarves while he casts *desecrate* at the end of the tunnel. As the troglodytes retreat, he channels negative energy to bolster the zombies and casts *protection from good* on himself. When the PCs and any surviving troglodytes come within range, he casts his *prayer* spell. In the following round, Da'treaal uses *summon monster III* to summon a Small earth elemental, which appears behind the PCs and attacks from the rear. He then casts *spiritual weapon* and directs it against any obvious cleric in the group. If his zombies are turned, Da'treaal tries to reestablish control. If the PCs appear close to defeating the troglodytes, Da'treaal orders the kobolds to leave the dwarves and take up positions in front the zombies. If the PCs get by his elemental, troglodytes, kobolds, and zombies, Da'treaal casts *hold person* followed by *cause fear, contagion* (brain rot against a cleric, demon fever for all others) and *inflict light wounds* spells. When he is out of offensive spells, Da'treaal takes up his *+1 light mace* and uses his smite ability on his first attack. He continues to fight until he has lost half of his hit points before trying to escape.

To escape, Da'treaal casts *sanctuary* on himself and then uses his innate ability to create *darkness,* centered on the PCs. In the *darkness* he casts *cure moderate wounds* on himself and tries to slip past the combat. He should succeed in escaping the tunnel, as the PCs are probably unwilling to risk hitting each other in the dark. (Use the rules for fighting while blind, as detailed in the *blindness* spell description on page 180 in the *Player's Handbook.*) Once past the PCs and their dwarf allies, Da'treaal runs to area **19** and begins moving barrels so he can open one of the doors. Two minutes later he slides down the chasm wall and escapes downstream. If escape is impossible or he is near death, Da'treaal offers to ransom himself for 200 pp if the PCs return him to his family.

If the PCs manage to catch Da'treaal by surprise, he issues the same orders to the zombies but orders the kobolds to attack immediately. The next round he casts his *prayer* spell and then continues the tactics given above from that point on.

Development: The four dwarves are manacled to a single long chain (Hardness 10, hp 5) that is secured with a padlock to a heavy stone block. Da'treaal has the key to the padlock, but it can also be picked with a successful Open Lock check (DC 22) or smashed open (Hardness 10, hp 10). If freed, the dwarves attack with light picks.

The dwarves want to see Da'treaal and his allies dead, and it requires a Diplomacy or Intimidate skill check (DC 25) to get them to accept any other resolution to the combat. A PC who successfully protects Da'treaal from the dwarves' wrath when he tries to surrender should be awarded 200 XP.

If he wins the battle, Da'treaal revives any PCs or dwarves who are not dead and has them put in the pit in area **25**. Any new prisoners are put to work on the tunnel and later taken back to the House of Achria as slaves or trophies.

27. Tool Storage. Da'treaal is using this chamber as his temporary quarters. The picks and shovels have been moved into the north portion of the chamber and a small cot set up against the south wall. The cot weighs only 6 pounds but is capable of supporting 200 pounds and breaks down to the size of an arrow quiver for easy transport.

At the foot of the cot rests a wooden chest sealed with a padlock. The padlock is sturdy (Hardness 10, hp 5) but can be unlocked with a successful Open Lock check (DC 20) or *knock* spell. Da'treaal has the only key to the padlock.

Treasure: The chest contains several items: a leather pack, three bottles of wine in a padded carrier, and a closed wicker basket. The leather pack contains 28 days of preserved rations. The wine is of drow manufacture and could be worth up to 50 gp a bottle to a connoisseur of wines or a specialty wine merchant. The wicker basket contains a crystal goblet worth 5 gp, a place setting of china dishware worth 20 gp total, and a set of silver cutlery worth 45 gp total.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs succeed in liberating the mine and have not tried to steal any of the dwarves' copper, they are invited to remain as guests until the mine can be cleaned up and a banquet held in their honor. It takes the dwarves a week to reopen the main doors to the mine and repair the damage caused by Da'treaal and the troglodytes. The PCs are not asked to help with the clean up, but those who do are paid 5 gp worth of copper ingots (five ingots) when the job is complete.

Despite the events of the past several weeks, the dwarves manage to pull off quite a banquet in the entry hall, and no one leaves hungry or thirsty. The banquet is presided over by the clan founder's surviving heir, Dain Rumblegut, who offers a toast to the PCs' bravery. If Akara's part in their rescue is made known to the dwarves, he is hailed as a hero and made a full clan member.

At the end of the feast, Dain quiets the hall and announces that each PC is to receive a reward of 20 copper ingots (each worth 1 gp), the creation of one metal or leather masterwork item, and a debt of honor from one of the dwarves rescued. For the masterwork item, the PC must supply the initial raw materials, but the work is guaranteed to be successful. (The cost of any failures is borne by the clan.) The debt of honor allows the PC to call upon the dwarf taking up the debt to act as the PC's henchman for a period of up to two weeks. The service can be dangerous but suicide missions, as judged by the clan leader, can be refused. Neither the masterwork item nor the debt of honor need be taken right away.

The day after the banquet, the dwarves begin discussing openly the changes necessary to convert the smelters into a tannery and the barracks into a woodshop. Curious PCs are told by the dwarves that since there aren't enough of them to

keep the mine going, they are turning to their back-up trades to make ends meet until the clan membership can be rebuilt. If the PCs suggest an alliance between the dwarves and the kobolds by way of Akara, the dwarves respond with skepticism. As far as the dwarves are concerned, Akara is a welcome addition to the clan, but he was never meant to be a leader. The dwarves add that the kobolds in the caves were nothing but trouble. Nevertheless, if Akara has become the chief of the kobolds in the caves, and the dwarves are made aware of it, they can be convinced to try forming an alliance. Akara has gained enough confidence from the success of his adventure to bring the two sides together, once the PCs encourage him to do so. The longevity of the alliance formed depends on the level of PC involvement. Akara might be chief of the kobolds, but he favors the dwarves and their needs over those of his tribe. If the PCs remain at the mine for several weeks and monitor Akara's progress, it should be relatively easy for them to correct his behavior and ensure a lasting alliance. If the PCs leave quickly after the alliance is formed, the kobolds soon realize that they are no better off than before and rebel. The forming of the alliance and the subsequent mentoring of Akara should involve some good roleplaying—or several Diplomacy, Wisdom, and Charisma checks—on the part of the PCs. Those PCs taking an active role in either phase of the alliance should receive an award of 200 XP respectively.

If the PCs did not eliminate Krista Ferns and her bandits the first time they encountered them, the bandits are surely waiting for their return. If the PCs are transporting their reward from the dwarves, the bandits attack in force.

If the PCs capture Da'treaal and decide to ransom him back to his family, they must journey deep underground to the nearest outpost of the House of Achria. This journey can be relatively easy or fraught with peril, but one thing is certain: Da'treaal's family is not going to hand over 200 pp unless they are sure they cannot take him by force.

If the PCs have been captured and are being taken to the House of Achria as slaves, they should be given ample opportunities to escape as the other denizens of the Underdark discover Da'treaal's fortune and try to take it for themselves. Of course, getting free is only the first step, as the PCs must then find their way back to the surface through miles of caverns and twisting tunnels.

Finally, the PCs might want to see where Da'treaal's tunnel was headed when they interrupted its construction. The dwarves want the tunnel collapsed as soon as possible and must be convinced by the PCs that continuing the tunnel benefits their long-term security, a task made easier if Da'treaal has escaped. The time required to finish the tunnel is noted in the description of area **26**, and its completion connects the PCs with a second tunnel running from the northeast to the southwest. PCs following the tunnel to the southwest journey about two miles before finding themselves at a concealed door in a mountainside just one mile west of the dwarven mine. Following the tunnel to the northeast leads through several hundred miles of tunnels and caves before reaching a heavily guarded outpost of the House of Achria. Ω

Peter writes: "I've been living and working in France for two years and don't get to play D&D very much, so I write adventures to keep my sanity. Sane or not, my work is in DUNGEON Magazine, *and that's what counts!"*

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (EL) for all of the encounters in "Ever-Changing Fortunes."

Area	Encounter Description	EL
A	Bandit Riders, Human Com1 (4)	5
	Bandit Archers, Half-elf Com1 (3)	
	Krista Ferns, Human Ftr2	
	Light Warhorses (5)	
B	Harry Westbrook, Human Rog1	1
	Greta Longjaw, Half-orc Rog1	1
4	Giant Fire Beetles (5)	2
6	Kobolds (4)	1
7	Chief Ukri, Kobold War1/Adp1	2
	Kobolds (10)	
8	Chief Ukri, Kobold War1/Adp1	4
	Kobolds (23)	
9	10-foot-deep Open Spiked Pit	2
14	Ryl, Troglodyte Ftr1	2
	Flying Lizards (2)	
*	Troglodyte (1)	1
	Kobolds (3)	
	Miners, Dwarves Exp2 (2)	
19	Ironhide, Troglodyte Rgr1	3
	Troglodytes (3)	
	Kobolds (3)	
	Romae Sigilstone, Dwarf War1	
24	Troglodytes (2)	2
25	Troglodytes (2)	3
	Kobolds (7)	
	Miners, Dwarves Exp2 (4)	
26	Da'treaal Achria, Drow Clr5	5
	Troglodytes (4)	+2
	Dwarf Zombies (2)	+1
	Kobolds (6)	+1/2
	Miners, Dwarves Exp2 (4)	+0

* Wandering monsters.

Special Thanks To Our Playtesters!

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Marc Sasso
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Lord of the Scarlet Tide

Born in Darkness, It Shuns the Light

by James Jacobs

artwork by Marc Sasso • cartography by Diesel

"Lord of the Scarlet Tide" is a D&D adventure designed for 9th-level characters. Heroes who survive the adventure should amass enough experience points to to advance to 11th level. The scenario can be modified for PCs of higher or lower level simply by increasing or decreasing the number of enemies found in the haunted city of J'bhulgolboth and the surrounding caverns. You can also increase the difficulty by limiting the chances the party has to rest and recover. Since most of the adventure takes place in the Underdark, some of the PCs should possess darkvision; a dwarf PC would be ideal. A cleric or paladin will also prove useful, due to the large amount of disease-carrying creatures encountered in the adventure.

Most of the villains in this adventure are scarlet children. These are normal creatures or people who have been transformed by scarlet rust, a horrible disease exuded by the main villain. You should familiarize yourself with the various powers and characteristics of scarlet children before running this adventure; full details on this monster template appear at the end of the scenario.

Magic Items Monsters Non-Player Characters (NPCs) Objects Settlements Traps

Adventure Background

The frontier city of Narwell is no stranger to times of trouble. The city has weathered countless attacks from the south mounted by the humanoids of the Pomarj. The Domain of Greyhawk has recently installed a garrison of soldiers in the city to aid them in their defense of the troubled border. Most of the buildings have large cellars to stockpile food, weapons, and other supplies in the event of a siege, and many wells sunk deep into the underlying bedrock provide the city with a convenient source of fresh water. Unfortunately for the citizens of Narwell, there were no provisions for defending the city from an invasion from below, through those very wells.

The troubles currently afflicting Narwell have their genesis in a series of events that took place many hundreds of years ago, when a large band of kuo-toa imprisoned an ancient fungoid beast known as Xhagevoxhab, the Scarlet Lord, in a deep underground lake. Recently, the Scarlet Lord nearly broke free from its prison. The magical prison held, but just barely. The Scarlet Lord was able only to taint the surrounding region with a terrible fungus called scarlet rust that rapidly began to transform all life in the area into fungoid slaves known as scarlet children. A great tide of this fungus surged upriver from the lake and eventually reached the reservoir under Narwell, where it was forced violently upward by the great tidal pressures. In the dead of night Narwell's wells began to back up and overflow with fungus. A significant number of the city's citizens were infected before things finally settled down and the fungus drained away back into the Underdark. The scarlet tide had wrought terrible damage, however.

Currently, well over two dozen "scarlet children" inhabit Narwell. Once normal men and women, they have been dominated both physically and mentally by the Scarlet Lord and are doing their best to prepare the city of Narwell for the coming of their new master.

The History of Xhagevoxhab

Forced into an uneasy truce by the fungoid menace, the drow and kuo-toa of the region mounted a risky offensive into the Scarlet Lord's domain. Working together, these rival nations forged a powerful artifact; the Chains of True Binding, to imprison the Scarlet Lord. The battle was furious, and the drowish forces were all but annihilated. Led by a powerful kuo-

Adapting the Adventure

Where appropriate, encounters possess an overall rating called Encounter Level (EL) to allow the DM to gauge the relative strength of the entire encounter at a glance. To determine experience points (XP) for an encounter, refer to the Challenge Rating (CR) of each individual monster or trap.

Modifying the adventure for your own campaign is fairly easy. The starting city should be one located on a contested border, and should not have a nearby source of water such as a lake or river, otherwise there is no reason for the city to possess several deep wells that tap into an underground lake. If your game world does not have an Underdark, you can convert the adventure so that J'bhulgolboth is located in a desolate mountain range or on a deserted section of coastline. The kuo-toa and their foul deity Blibdoolpoolp can be found in most campaign worlds; if they do not normally exist in your campaign, perhaps this group represents the final members of a now extinct race. Replacing the kuo-toa with another race works as well; sahuagin would be the obvious choice.

The easiest method to alter the challenges presented in this adventure is to change class levels for those monsters that possess them. This adventure is balanced for four 9th-level characters; if your group consists of lower-level characters, simply lower the class levels of the enemies in this adventure by the same number (to a minimum of 1). Thus, if you run this adventure for a group of four 6th-level characters, make Plugoo a 4th-level ranger, Gorrkulabuk a 4th-level cleric, and so on. If your PCs are higher than 9th level, adjust the enemies' class levels upward in the same manner.

Certain encounters in this adventure are especially deadly. If your group is lower than the recommended level, you might consider omitting the encounters with Yidrith the mind flayer, Skellyglur the behir, the greater water elemental, and some of the tougher ghosts in the Claw of Blibdoolpoolp. Conversely, if you would prefer to keep the encounters, consider making them less daunting specimens of their kind. For instance, Yidrith the mind flayer might be crippled (amputated tentacles or lower-than-normal hit points), the ancient behir might be an average behir with average hit points, and the greater water elemental could be a Large elemental or wave of 2-3 Small or Medium-size elementals.

If your group is tougher than the recommended level, perhaps Skellyglur has an equally large mate lairing with him. Give Yidrith a few *charmed* slaves (some grimlock rangers, perhaps). Maybe Sifkhu bound a death slaad or other outsider to his tomb to guard his remains, or maybe the party will have to battle the Scarlet Lord for a few extra rounds at the end of the adventure before they can restore the Chains of True Binding.

Finally, you can easily adjust the potency of the scarlet rust by raising or lowering the Difficulty Class (DC) needed to resist infestation; for instance, 15th-level PCs might roll against a DC of 15 + the Hit Dice of the scarlet child (instead of 10 + the Hit Dice of the scarlet child). This is probably the easiest way to adjust the power level of the adventure.

Finally, you might want to increase or decrease the DCs for traps, where appropriate, but remember that this will alter the traps' CRs.

Additional suggestions for adjusting adventures to various levels of play can be found in Chapter 4 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

toa cleric named Sifkhu, the kuo-toans reached the Scarlet Lord and were able to affix the Chains of True Binding to Xhagevoxhab, neutralizing its powers and causing all of its fungoid minions to perish. Sifkhu then hid the imprisoned beast in the depths of a vast lake in the heart of what was once its empire. The surviving kuo-toa then founded a city on the shores of this same lake and named the city J'bhulgolboth. Sifkhu engraved the story of Xhagevoxhab on a set of tablets, along with the proper spells to revitalize the Chains of True Binding should their magic ever fail.

Eventually, Sifkhu died, and as the generations passed by, the story of Xhagevoxhab was reduced to a campfire tale. Young kuo-toa would often prove their bravery by swimming to the bottom of the lake and returning to the surface with one of the strange red weeds that grew down there as proof of their heroism.

About 40 years ago, the Scarlet Lord was partially released during one of these tests of bravery. Xhagevoxhab was able to corrupt the waters with fungus and began to infest the surrounding regions. J'bhulgolboth's priests eventually managed to banish the fungus back into the prison using the ancient Sifkhu Tablets. Unfortunately, the Chains of True Binding were damaged, and every seven years their energies wane, enabling the Scarlet Lord to again exert its influence.

The priests of J'bhulgolboth developed a strong tradition where they would beat back the fungus incursion and follow up with great celebrations. For many years, the Scarlet Lord was held in check.

Two weeks ago, the city of J'bhulgolboth suffered a surprise attack by the drow. The attack was barely repulsed, and the city was in little shape to deal with the Scarlet Tide when it rose nine days later. The lake ran red with the Scarlet Lord's fungus, and nearly the entire city succumbed to its crimson embrace before the priests of the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp were able to use the Sifkhu Tablets to banish the Tide. But the priests were too exhausted from the recent battle with the drow to properly word the spell, and it backfired. The resulting surge of magical energies killed the remaining priests as it forced Xhagevoxhab back into its prison. The spell was incomplete, and the infestation grew.

Xhagevoxhab continues to work at the walls of its prison, and it won't be long now until it escapes. And this time, there may be nothing to stop its return . . .

Adventure Summary

This adventure begins when the party arrives in the city of Narwell the morning after the Scarlet Tide has risen. After running afoul of a group of thugs led by a former member of the city guard who has been transformed into one of the scarlet children, the heroes quickly realize that something unusual is going on in town. They are sought out by a representative of the city and are hired to help restore order.

During the course of the city's battles with the scarlet children, it became clear that these fungus-infested lunatics were serving a higher power. According to the writings of an infected cleric, an awakening power dubbed the Scarlet Lord

threatens to absorb the world. The city, their resources terribly depleted and facing a possible invasion from the Pomarj any day, turns to the party for aid, begging them to descend into the wells that spewed forth the terrible fungus to find out if there is any truth to the mad priest's ravings.

The party discovers a vast network of waterways and caverns deep under Narwell. Worse, all of the indigenous life seems to have been infested by the same red fungus, making them more aggressive and dangerous than normal. They might even encounter a few of the locals who have managed to escape infestation. One of these "locals" is an outcast mind flayer who sees the scarlet rust as a way to exact revenge against illithid society. The other is a small group of svirfneblin gnomes who have been cut off from their city by the fungus and might be recruited as guides. PCs might even encounter some of the survivors of previous expeditions into the caves. Eventually, their explorations lead them to the source of the scarlet fungus: the ruined kuo-toa city of J'bhulgolboth.

Upon investigating the city, the heroes find it occupied by kuo-toa and other monsters that have been infested with scarlet rust. The PCs also learn of Xhagevoxhab. Eventually, they learn that the greatest weapon to combat the fungus is hidden away under the one building in the city that survived the disaster relatively intact; the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp.

Unfortunately, the ghosts of dead priests haunt this temple. To recover the Sifkhu Tablets and return Xhagevoxhab to its uneasy slumber, the PCs must overcome the undead guardians of the temple. Assuming they recover the Sifkhu Tablets and use the magics to renew the power of the Chains of True Binding, they might even catch a glimpse of the Scarlet Lord as it makes one final, frenzied attempt to escape its prison. The party should emerge from the Underdark victorious, but at the same time wary; they have only stalled the awakening of the Scarlet Lord. Is there anything they can do to end its threat once and for all?

Adventure Hooks

This adventure takes place in and under the town of Narwell in the southern holdings of the Domain of Greyhawk. Skirmishes with the evil humanoid forces of the Pomarj have been on the rise lately, and the populace is justifiably nervous. When the Scarlet Tide rises on the night of the first new moon of summer, the city is taken completely by surprise. About two dozen scarlet children were created that night, but many were slain in the resulting riots. Since then, the surviving scarlet children have adopted more subtle tactics, and now plan to slowly consume the populace of Narwell from the inside out to prepare for the coming of their Scarlet Lord.

This adventure begins as the heroes enter the troubled city of Narwell. Their reasons for traveling to Narwell should be tailored by the DM to fit the campaign. Some possible reasons to travel to Narwell are listed here:

- The party has heard that the Headhunters of Narwell have adopted a generous bounty program for captured and slain humanoids from the Pomarj, and they are traveling here to sign up to become bounty hunters.
- The party is hired in some other city to deliver a set of magical scrolls or a spellbook to one of Narwell's inhabitants, possibly Orlumandrius the wizard or Caeseara Willowmane.
- The PCs have uncovered some strange, mystical books that hold secrets they must unravel; a bit of research reveals that a gnome historian named Seraktikor Drantaki is an expert on the very subject they need. Of course, Seraktikor lives in Narwell.
- Narwell could be the home town of one of the player characters; alternatively, one of the PCs might have a close relative (such as a brother or cousin) or former colleague living there. The party could be visiting Narwell to pursue adventure leads or catch up with these relations.

Ultimately, the reason the party needs to travel to Narwell is unimportant, for once they arrive they quickly find themselves embroiled in the machinations of the scarlet children.

Town of Narwell

Narwell is described only briefly, as the PCs won't be spending much time in the city before plumbing the depths of the Underdark. These statistics are provided as a baseline for further encounters in Narwell.

Narwell (Large Town): Nonstandard; AL CG; 5,000-gp limit; Assets 1,215,000 gp; Population 4,775; Mixed (human 3901, half-elf 293, gnome 243, halfling 137, dwarf 121, elf 73, half-orc 7).

Authority Figures: Baron Janstin, male human Rog9; Captain Ruberis Nenshen, male human Ftr11/Rog3.

Important Characters: Bladestorm, female half-elf Clr6/Rgr6 (infamous Headhunter); Captain Romerian Timane, male human Rgr9 (Headhunter captain); Garinorth Krunel, male human Clr5 (St. Cuthburt/Headhunter); Drugia Brakus, female half-orc Rog10 (Leader of Graycloaks); Caeseara Willowmane, female human Clr8 (Ehlonna/healer); Axentakus Krune, male human Clr4 (Kord/garrison recruiter); Dweren Sveer, female gnome Drd4 (healer); Orlumandrius, male half-elf Wiz7 (eccentric local); Chadrithar Kothais, male human Adp6 (merchant); Seraktikor Drantaki, male gnome Exp9 (historian); Drew Janstin, female human Ari6 (baron's daughter).

Others: Town guards, Ftr3 (5), Ftr2 (10), Ftr1 (100), War3 (10), War2 (25), War1 (200); Headhunters, Clr3 (1), Clr2 (3), Rog5 (3), Rog3 (7), Rog1 (11), Rgr5 (2), Rgr3 (3), Rgr2 (8), Rgr1 (11); Greycloaks, Ftr2 (1), Ftr1 (2), Rog4 (4); Rog2 (8); Bbn5 (1); Bbn3 (2); Bbn1 (4); Brd3 (2); Brd1 (4); Clr4 (1); Clr2 (4); Clr1 (8); Ftr9 (1); Ftr4 (2); Ftr2 (3); Ftr1 (6); Mnk4 (1); Mnk2 (2); Mnk1 (4); Pal5 (1); Pal2 (2); Pal1 (4); Rgr6 (1); Rgr3 (2); Rgr1 (4); Rog5 (1); Rog2 (4); Rog1 (5); Sor4 (1); Sor2 (2); Sor1 (4); Wiz3 (2); Wiz1 (4); Adp6 (1); Adp3 (2); Adp1 (25); Com4 (1); Com7 (2); Com3 (4); Com1 (3864); Exp4 (2); Exp2 (4); Exp1 (127); Ari3 (2); Ari1 (25); War8 (1); War4 (2); War2 (4); War1 (200).

Notes: Narwell is a frontier town located on the border of the Domain of Greyhawk and the Pomarj. Its governor, Baron Janstin, and the commander of the recently established Greyhawk garrison, Captain Nenshen, jointly administer the town. The two constantly vie for control over the city. Baron Janstin would prefer to run the city as an independent force while Captain Nenshen would like to turn the town into a key fortification against the evil incursors of the Pomarj. A third group has recently risen to power, although this group has little interest in political aspirations. These are the Headhunters, an independent group of bounty hunters originally created by Captain Nenshen. Captain Romerian Timane leads these rogues, clerics, and rangers on missions to capture criminals and evil humanoids.

A large number of thugs, bandits, and thieves call Narwell home, but the strong military presence has kept an organized

theves' guild from manifesting. The closest Narwall has to such an organization are the secretive Graycloaks. Several years ago, Narwall's citizens hunted down and lynched every last orc, half-orc, and hobgoblin living in the city. Since then, a small group of half-orcs disguised as humans has infiltrated the city; this group of rogues and warriors call themselves the Graycloaks. They are led by a powerful half-orc rogue named Drugia Brakus who wants nothing less than vengeance on the city of Narwell for the slaughtering of her family during the Night of Terror.

Despite the heavy military presence in the city, the laws here are not strict. There is conscription, but there are no curfews, for example. The militia is tough and honorable, and while they may turn a blind eye to banditry that occurs in the outlying area, blatant disregard for common decency within the city proper is punished quickly and justly.

Narwell is a very old city. It has suffered many attacks from the beasts of the Pomarj, and the city's defenders haven't won all of these battles. Narwell has been razed many times in the past several decades; each time, the city has been rebuilt over its own ruins.

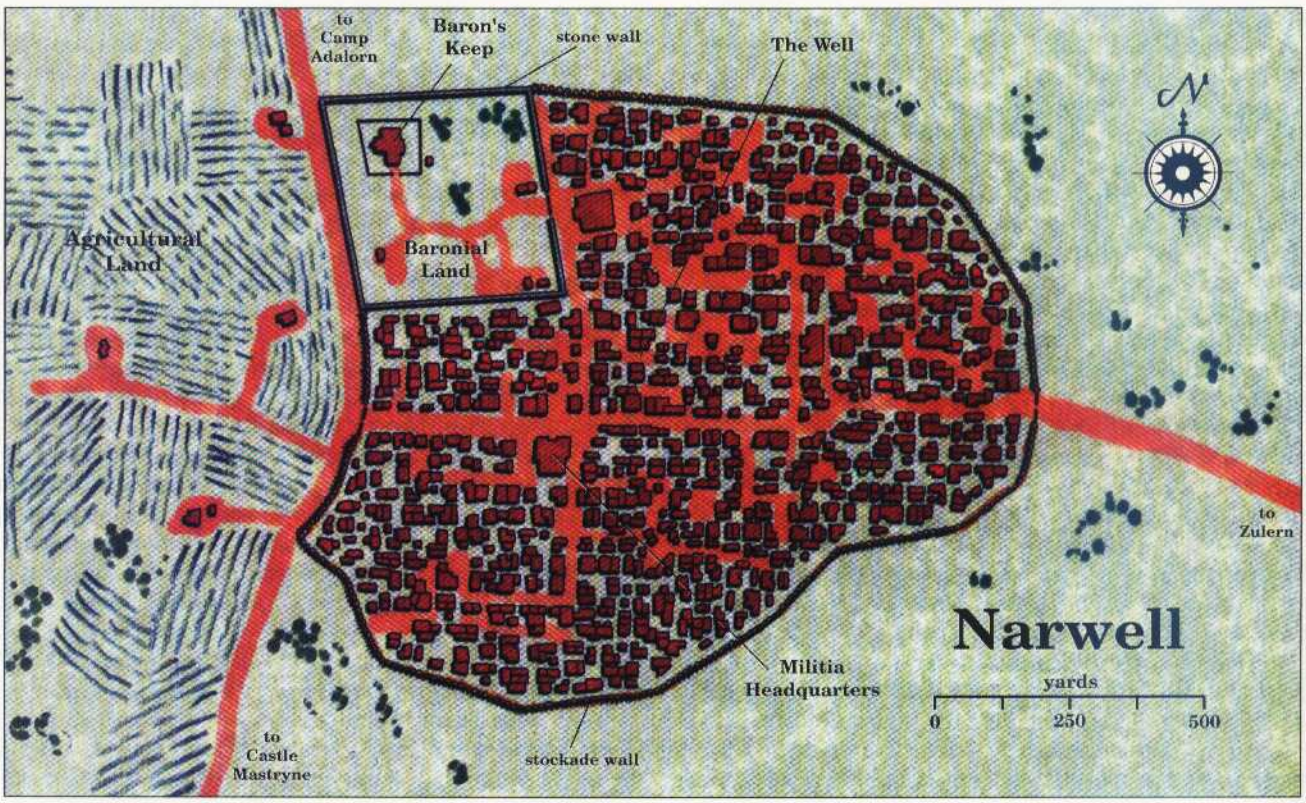
During this adventure, Narwell is under siege from within. The Scarlet Tide struck as most of Narwell's troops were out in the field, and the city was ill-prepared to deal with the attack. Many citizens were wounded and infested by the scarlet children, and altercations with scarlet children have ended bloodily. About eighty people have perished so far, and two times that number have been seriously wounded. Dawn brought a reprieve, and Narwell's citizens took advantage of the break to stock up on food and water and hide in their homes. Many windows and doors are boarded up from the inside, and citizens cower inside hoping the militia and Headhunters deal with the threat before it strikes again. The militia and Headhunters have been scouring the city for the scarlet children but are having a hard time uncovering them all. Most of the city's commanders are out in the field, so the militia and Headhunters have decided to maintain a vigil on the streets and wait for their commanders to return before taking any decisive actions.

Currently, there are twenty-five scarlet children scattered throughout the city (this includes Tor Scarchin and his thugs, detailed below). All of Drugia's Graycloaks (including herself) have succumbed to the scarlet rust and are plotting the best way to spread the infestation. The other scarlet children have learned that the best way to fight the militia is to employ guerrilla tactics and ambushes. They have now gone into hiding in various places throughout the city and wait patiently for chances to spread the scarlet rust to small groups of guards (and adventurers!) caught unawares.

Event 1. Arrival in Narwell.

The party arrives in Narwell two days after the Scarlet Tide besets the city; try to orchestrate things so the PCs arrive in town during the evening, as sunlight forces the scarlet children into dormancy and the initial encounter takes place just inside the city walls. Read or paraphrase the following paragraph as the party approaches the city:

> At last; the frontier town of Narwell lies before you. The city is a welcome sight after days of travel. It is surrounded by a sturdy wooden stockade; the city itself sits atop a low hill backed by agricultural land. Smoke wafts into the air from countless chimneys, but as you draw nearer you notice that the city seems strangely quiet and subdued, almost as if the citizens were afraid to make too much noise. The main gate



into the city hangs open, and not a single guard is in sight. Beyond, the streets are quiet and empty.

If the party enters Narwell through a city gate, each PC can make a Spot check to notice the small band of scarlet children lurking in the shadows near the gate. (The PCs' Spot checks are opposed by the scarlet children's Hide checks.) Tor and three of the other scarlet children try to flank the PCs once they've entered the city; two others spend a round slamming shut the gate and barring it to prevent escape. If the party enters the city by some other method (such as by flying over the walls), they merely delay the attack. The scarlet children attack the PCs at some later time (perhaps as they are looking for accommodation), as circumstances allow.

Creatures (EL 6): A 3rd-level fighter named Tor Scarchin leads this band of five ex-guards. Tor was one of the first victims of the Scarlet Tide. Since then, he has been infecting his men, building up a band of thugs to help enforce the "scarlet law" in Narwell. Tor and his group have just finished infesting the actual gate guards on duty; they have stashed these five bodies in an abandoned house nearby and are waiting for the remains to reanimate as scarlet children.

Tor and his men wear helms, gauntlets, and suits of chain mail to hide the signs of the infestation; they can still make tendril attacks through the eye-holes in their helmets. They must remove their helmets to use their breath weapons, however. As they attack, Tor utters a battle cry in a thick, slobbering voice: "For the Scarlet Lord!"

Tor Scarchin, Scarlet Child, Male Human War3: CR 4; Medium-Size Plant (6 ft. tall); HD 3d8+9; hp 26; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +5 chainmail, +2 large shield); Atk +4 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +7 melee (1d10+3/crit 19-20, masterwork bastard sword); or +4 ranged (1d10/crit 19-20, heavy crossbow); Reach 15 ft. (tendril attack only); SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, vulnerable to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +8 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7*, Intimidate +4, Hide +3*, Jump +5*, Move Silently +3*, Ride +5, Swim +5*. *Feats:* Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Fortitude, Power Attack.

* These skill modifiers do not include the -5 armor check penalty for wearing chainmail.

Possessions: Chainmail, large steel shield, masterwork bastard sword, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, 20 gp, 45 sp.

Scarlet Children, Male Human War1 (5): CR 2; Medium-Size Plant (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8+2; hp 11, 10, 9, 6, 6; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 small shield); Atk +1 melee (infestation, tendril); or +2 melee (1d8+1/crit 19-20, longsword); or +1 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); Reach 15 ft. (tendril attack only); SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, vulnerable to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 5.

Skills: Climb +3*, Hide +2*, Listen +1 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +1*, Ride +3, Spot +1 (includes Alertness feat), Swim +2*. *Feats:* Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword).

* These skill modifiers do not include the -5 armor check penalty for wearing chainmail.

Possessions: Chainmail, longsword, small metal shield, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 6 gp, 10 sp.

Development: Unless the party thinks to check the nearby houses, the five growing scarlet children Tor has hidden within soon mature. These victims were all 1st-level warriors (use the statistics given above) and, lacking Tor's guidance, begin to wander aimlessly through town seeking victims to infect.

Event 2. Talking with the Headhunters.

The party's encounter with Tor and his thugs does not go unnoticed, and word of their success against this band of scarlet children spreads. Before long, the Headhunters catch wind of the event and send a band of three 1st-level rangers led by a 3rd-level ranger to find the heroes and invite them to a safehouse to discuss the problem afflicting Narwell. Assuming the PCs agree to this arrangement, they are led into a large stone building that serves as the Headhunters' base of operations. There, they are escorted to a small meeting chamber to speak with the leader of the Headhunters, Captain Romerian Timane.

The captain is a grizzled veteran of many skirmishes in the Pomarj. He does not tolerate gross violations of the law from his Headhunters and sees this current crisis as a chance to show the town garrison (and Captain Ruberis Nenshen) that his troops are both trustworthy and valuable for Narwell's safety. He is deeply tanned and bears numerous scars from his battles. His hair is steel gray and cut short, and his voice is deep and strong. No statistics for him are provided here, but bear in mind he is a lawful neutral 9th-level ranger. (Use **Table 2-40** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to generate statistics and equipment as needed.)

Captain Timane appears weary and has not slept since the Scarlet Tide first struck. He is abrupt, thanking the party for dispatching Tor and his scarlet children thugs. He then hands them several bags of gold coins (one sack of 100 gp per scarlet child slain in the previous encounter), stating that 100 gp is the current bounty for slaying one of these menaces. He knows there are several more scarlet children still alive in Narwell and informs the PCs that if they manage to dispatch any more of them they will be paid the same.

Captain Timane can fill the party in on recent events. Read or paraphrase the following to the players at this time:

"Again, thank you for dealing with those . . . things. We've been fighting these monsters for the past two days, but their scarlet infestation spreads like the plague. Just as we put down one group of them, another pops up across town. I've lost five of my soldiers fighting them.

"Three nights ago, Narwell successfully repulsed a legion of orc barbarians from the south, and most of the city's elite troops were sent out to follow the orcs in hopes of dealing a critical blow to their leaders. We were woefully unprepared when the Scarlet Tide struck the following night.

"Two nights ago, just before midnight, many of our city wells suddenly backed up, spilling water into the streets. Before long, the water gave way to waves of red, liquid fungus. The scarlet rust spread everywhere, seeping into nearby houses and buildings. People who came into contact with this scarlet fungus came to a terrible end. The stuff takes root in human flesh like weeds on a grave, growing throughout the body and driving the victim insane. Death follows quickly, but that is only the beginning. The scarlet rust animates those it kills, transforming the corpses into foul zombies. These zombies are resistant to attacks that affect undead, including

turning and holy water. Worse, they work together, forming small groups that lie in wait to ambush the living. They can lash out at their victims with whiplike tendrils of fungus; it's clear now that these tendrils can spread the disease to new victims. These horrors must be destroyed, and quickly."

At this point, if any of the heroes are infected with the scarlet rust and the captain is made aware of this, his face blanches. He immediately calls for Axentakus Krune, the building's highest-level resident priest. Krune arrives before long with the building's complete stash of seven *potions of remove disease* and four *potions of lesser restoration;* any PCs who are currently infested are given an appropriate potion. Krune has already depleted his spells, so he cannot offer much more in the way of aid. Captian Timane agrees to loan half of any remaining potions to the party. He knows all too well that the supply of potions is far too little for the plague at hand. Once any infested victims are healed, the captain continues:

"Until the rest of the city's militia returns, we are at a severe disadvantage. I have some of my men and some of the town guards patrolling the streets, but the scarlet zombies are well hidden. We have learned a few things about the beasts, though. They can regenerate almost any kind of damage, although they are susceptible to electricty and are paralyzed by direct exposure to sunlight. This has been our saving grace, actually. During the day, the creatures become dormant and we can focus on shoring up our defenses, treating the wounded, and scouring the city for monsters.

"One of my men made a grisly discovery last night. It seems that one of the local priests became infected and attacked one of my patrols with his magic. They managed to put him down but discovered on his body several sheets of paper—disturbing and wholly depraved prayers written to someone or something called the Scarlet Lord. Since then, we have noticed other scarlet zombies partaking in strange rituals and mouthing short prayers to this Scarlet Lord.

"To put it bluntly, we need all the help we can get. These monsters are getting more organized with each night. We've managed to contain the threat for now, but for how long? And what if another tide of that scarlet rust washes up from the wells? We would be lost!

"I need a group of brave and able-bodied adventurers to descend into the wells and find out what's going on down there. Where did this stuff come from? Is there more? Who is this Scarlet Lord the zombies speak of? What are his plans for Narwell? I can, of course, reward you generously for any aid or answers you can render to us. I won't delude you; this is a dangerous mission. I've already sent some of my best Headhunters down below, and they have yet to return. I fear they have met some terrible fate."

This adventure assumes that the PCs agree to investigate the wells. They might choose to remain in the city and either help the Headhunters fight scarlet children and/or rest and recover from their earlier fight. Captain Timane tries to convince them that the wells are the key, but he knows he can't force the party to do what he wants. If the PCs ask about the previous team sent into the wells, Captain Timane tells them it consisted of a group of several rogues and rangers led by an accomplished ranger/cleric of Trithereon named Bladestorm. If their fate can be ascertained, Captain Timane would be most grateful. If the PCs ask about rewards, Timane nods his head and asks what they want. He is desperate and agrees to pay anything the party demands, as long as the demand is reasonable. You should tailor the reward to match your campaign.

Tracking down and fighting the scarlet children in Narwell is beyond the scope of this adventure. Brief notes are included in the description of Narwell above to aid you in running such encounters; you can even adapt some short city-based adventures for this purpose by simply applying the scarlet children template to the villains of the adventure. If the party is avoiding exploration of the wells, you can even have another minor backwash of fungus to arouse their interest. Eventually, the party should realize that clambering down into the wells is the only way to learn more about the situation at hand.

Event 3. Down the Well.

A large water-filled cavern is located some 100 feet below Narwell; the presence of this reservoir was divined long ago by a group of wizards who were searching for just such a supply of fresh water to found the fortified city. The wells were dug with magic over the course of a night and remain the oldest structures in the city. Narwell has been razed many times by orcs from the Pomarj, but the wells have withstood the savages of war quite well.

The location of the well Captain Timane sends the PCs to is marked on the map of Narwell. It is a squat, 3-foot-high circular stone wall surrounding an 8-foot-diameter shaft; it is covered with a wooden roof and is mounted with a crank to lower a large bucket into the depths. Traces of scarlet rust cling to the mortar and ground surrounding the well; it looks like dried blood. This rust appears menacing, but it has lost the ability to infest living tissue and is harmless.

Creatures (EL 9): Far from harmless are the four half-orc scarlet children lurking in a nearby alley. These rogues were originally Graycloaks. Their leader, Drugia, found out about the expedition that Captain Timane sent into the Underdark and suspects that he might send more invaders below. Drugia knows that the Scarlet Lord is still vulnerable and also knows that every band of explorers sent into the Underdark poses a threat to her new master. Thus, she has commanded her four best men to lie in wait near the well. If they see anyone attempting to enter the well, these four rogues move silently into position for sneak attacks, fighting to the death in an attempt to stop the incursion.

If the PCs enter the well during the day, they are observed by the four scarlet children from the safety of a nearby abandoned building. Once the sun sets, the four scarlet children pursue the heroes into the Underdark, stalking them and attacking with surprise when their guard is down.

Scarlet Children, Male Half-orc Rog4 (4): CR 5; Medium-Size Plant (6 ft. tall); HD 4d8+8; hp 33, 31, 27, 26; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 magic *leather armor*); Atk +7 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +7 melee (1d8+3/crit 19-20, masterwork longsword); or +6 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); Reach 15 ft. (tendril attack only); SA sneak attack (+2d6), infestation, breath weapon; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Random Underdark Encounters

As the PCs explore the Underdark, there is a chance they encounter one of the following denizens. Roll d% every hour and consult the table below. On a roll of 1-20, the indicated creature is encountered. On a roll of 21-100, no encounter occurs. Add 11 to the roll to generate aquatic encounters.

Roll d%	Encounter	EL
1	Scarlet Child, Destrachan (1)	9
2	Scarlet Children, Digesters (2)	9
3	Scarlet Child, Umber Hulk (1)	8
4	Phantom Fungi (5)	8
5	Black Puddings (2)	9
6-7	Scarlet Children, Gricks (6)	8
8-9	Scarlet Children, Carrion Crawlers (3)	8
10-11	Scarlet Children, Darkmantles (8)	8
12-14	Scarlet Child, Chuul (1)	8
15-20	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa (4)	9
21-00	No Encounter	—

Scarlet Child, Destrachan (1): CR 9; Large Plant (8 ft. tall); HD 8d8+32; hp 78; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +9 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +9 melee (1d6+4 [×2], claws); Face 5 ft. × 10 ft.; SA infestation, breath weapon, destructive harmonics, reverberating harmonics; SQ blindsight, protection from sonics, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +12, Intuit Direction +11, Listen +25, Move Silently +12. *Feat:* Improved Initiative.

Scarlet Children, Digesters (2): CR 7; Medium-Size Plant (6 ft. long); HD 8d8+32; hp 65 each; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 60 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +10 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +11 melee (1d8+4, rake); SA acid spray, infestation, breath weapon; SQ scent, acid immunity, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +15, Listen +7, Jump +10, Move Silently +6, Spot +7. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Scarlet Child, Umber Hulk (1): CR 8; Large Plant (8 ft. tall, 5 ft. broad); HD 8d8+40; hp 83; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural); Atk +9 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +11 melee (2d8+3 [×2], claws), +9 melee (2d8+3, bite); Reach 10 ft.; SA confusing gaze, infestation, breath weapon; SQ tremorsense, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +17, Hide +5, Jump +14, Listen +11, Move Silently +5. *Feat:* Multiattack.

Phantom Fungi (4): CR 3; hp 15 each; see *Monster Manual* 149 for complete statistics.

Black Puddings (2): CR 7; hp 115 each; see *Monster Manual* 145 for complete statistics.

Scarlet Children, Gricks (6): CR 4; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. long); HD 2d8+2; hp 11 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft, climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +4 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +3 melee (1d4+2 [×4], rakes), -2 melee (1d3+1, bite); SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, scent, regeneration 3, damage reduction 15/+1, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 3.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +8 (+16 in natural rocky areas), Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Spot +7. *Feats:* Alertness.

Scarlet Children, Carrion Crawlers (3): CR 5; Large Plant (9 ft. long); HD 3d8+9; hp 22 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +5 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +3 melee (paralysis [×8], tentacle), -2 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face 5 ft. × 10 ft.; SA paralysis, infestation, breath weapon; SQ scent, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 15, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6. *Feats:* Alertness.

Scarlet Children, Darkmantles (8): CR 2; Small Plant; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 15 (+1 size, +4 natural); Atk +1 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +5 melee (1d4+4, slam); SA darkness, improved grab, constrict 1d4+4, infestation, breath weapon; SQ blindsight, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +15, Listen +5, Move Silently +4. *Feats:* Improved Initiative.

Scarlet Child, Chuul (1): CR 8; Large Plant (10 ft. tall); HD 11d8+55; hp 106; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural); Atk +14 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +12 melee (2d6+5 [×2], claw); Reach 10 ft.; SA infestation, breath weapon, improved grab, crush, paralysis; SQ paralysis and poison immunity, darkvision 60 ft., plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 3.

Skills: Hide +20, Jump +12, Listen +9, Spot +9.

Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2 (4): CR 5; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. tall); HD 4d8+19 (includes Toughness feat); hp 32 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft, swim 50 ft.; AC 20 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +3 studded leather armor, +2 large shield); Atk +5 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +9 melee (1d8+2/crit ×3, shortspear with Weapon Focus), +3 melee (1d4, bite); or +8 ranged (1d8+2/crit ×3, shortspear with Weapon Focus); SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease,* keen sight, slippery, adhesive, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious; AL NE; SV Fort +12 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +4, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +5, Craft (weaponsmith) +6, Escape Artist +19, Jump +5, Listen +11 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +4, Search +10, Spot +13 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, shortspear, large steel shield, net pouch containing 1d4 50-gp gems.

Notes: These kuo-toa are a scouting party sent by the Scarlet Lord to patrol the tunnels. Each of these kuo-toa can use a partial action to spit a glob of scarlet rust onto the tip of its spear. There is enough scarlet rust per application for one successful attack. The effects are detailed in the "Scarlet Rust" sidebar at the end of the module.

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +9, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +1, Hide +10, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +7, Pick Pocket +9, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +7. *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Track.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, masterwork longsword, shortbow with 5 arrows, 30 sp and 15 gp in pouch.

Development: Normally, the water table lies about 30 feet below the lip of the well. The recent tide has depleted the underground reservoir, however, so that now the wellshaft descends 100 feet before emerging into a huge underground cavern nearly filled with water; the surface of the water is another 20 feet from the bottom of the shaft.

Time has eroded niches and footholds in the walls of the wellshaft, but they remain quite slippery. Climbing down the well requires a successful Climb check (DC 25). The band of Headhunters who descended the shaft avoided the perils of falling by using *fly* spells.

The Underdark (Areas U1-U24)

The party's main goal in this portion of the adventure should be to explore the tunnels under Narwell and find out where the strange scarlet fungus originated. There are several NPCs in the region who have valuable clues that should aid the party. In addition, the heroes are not the first group of adventurers to enter this region; a band of Headhunters led by the cleric/ranger Bladestorm recently tried to explore the area. This effort met with disaster, and the PCs have a chance to rescue Bladestorm if they act quickly.

The caverns of this section of the Underdark are for the most part quite moist and cold. Except for isolated patches of phosphorescent fungi, the caves are lightless. Passageways are usually 15 feet wide and 20 feet high, although in some areas they are a mere 6 feet wide. Rivulets of water trickle down from the ceiling and walls to form countless puddles and shallow pools on the ground. The floor itself is rough and uneven. Passages slope down toward the Scarlet Lake (area **U23**) in jagged steps, sometimes dropping as much as 30 feet. For purposes of movement, treat travel through these caverns as a bad surface with poor visibility; thus, PCs who move at a speed of 20 feet can cover about half a mile in an hour.

Most of the inhabitants of this region have either fled the area or been transformed into scarlet children. Small patches of scarlet rust grow on the walls and floors of these caverns. Avoiding these patches of fungus is a simple matter. Although there are a few non-transformed creatures still living in the area, they are the exceptions to the rule.

U1. The Reservoir. This 50-foot-deep cavern contains 30 feet of water. The water empties into this cavern via several springs located on the south and west walls. Aside from the scarlet rust in the water, there are no living creatures to be found in this chamber. The water is carried out a 20-foot-high submerged tunnel in the east wall.

The scarlet rust in the water can infect those who immerse themselves or accidentally drink it (see the "Scarlet Rust" sidebar for details). *Water breathing* spells allow PCs to move underwater without drowning but do not protect against infestation. A strong swimmer might be able to make it through the reservoir to an air pocket without ingesting any water, but this requires a successful Swim check (DC 15). *Control water* spells can be used to lower the water level temporarily. *Diminish plants* and *purify food and drink* spells can render harmless any tainted water in the affected area; however, the water becomes tainted again after only 1 minute. *Anti-plant shell* filters out the scarlet rust fungus and prevents it from entering the *shell* for the spell's duration. Other spells might have similar effects as you see fit.

U2. Skoraknagit River. The main artery that flows through this region was known to the kuo-toa as the Skoraknagit River. The river is completely submerged for the 270 feet between the reservoir cave (area **U1**) and the chuul lair (area **U3**). For the rest of its run, it fills no more than 50% of the passageway. This river is fairly placid, and should pose no real difficulty for PCs who wish to use a boat or raft to navigate its run. The river averages 20 feet deep and has no shallows or rapids.

Keep in mind that this water is tainted with scarlet rust; this gives the water a faint red tint. The banks of the river are thick with partially dried rust, large chunks of which sometimes break free to float down the river.

U3. Chuul Lair.

The tainted waters of the river empty into a cavern here. The floors and walls of the cave are exceptionally thick with mounds of slowly writhing scarlet fungus, and the air seems musty and humid. A large mound of the fungus partially blocks the river's progress in the center of the cavern where a large pool has formed. A dry tunnel exits the cave to the east.

This cavern has been the home of a chuul for many years. When the scarlet tide rose, the creature quickly succumbed to the infestation, only to be slain not long after by Bladestorm's band of Headhunters. The monster's body has since become a solid mound of scarlet rust. It has not had the time to generate spores yet; disturbing it does not trigger a sporecloud.

Treasure: The Chuul keept its treasure buried in the muddy fungus at the bottom of the pool; Bladestorm's group did not find this stash before they moved on. A successful Search check (DC 20) on the pool discovers this stash, which consists of 500 sp, a *+1 greatsword*, a *potion of charisma* in a waterproof glass container, and a *brooch of shielding* that can absorb 41 points of *magic missile* damage.

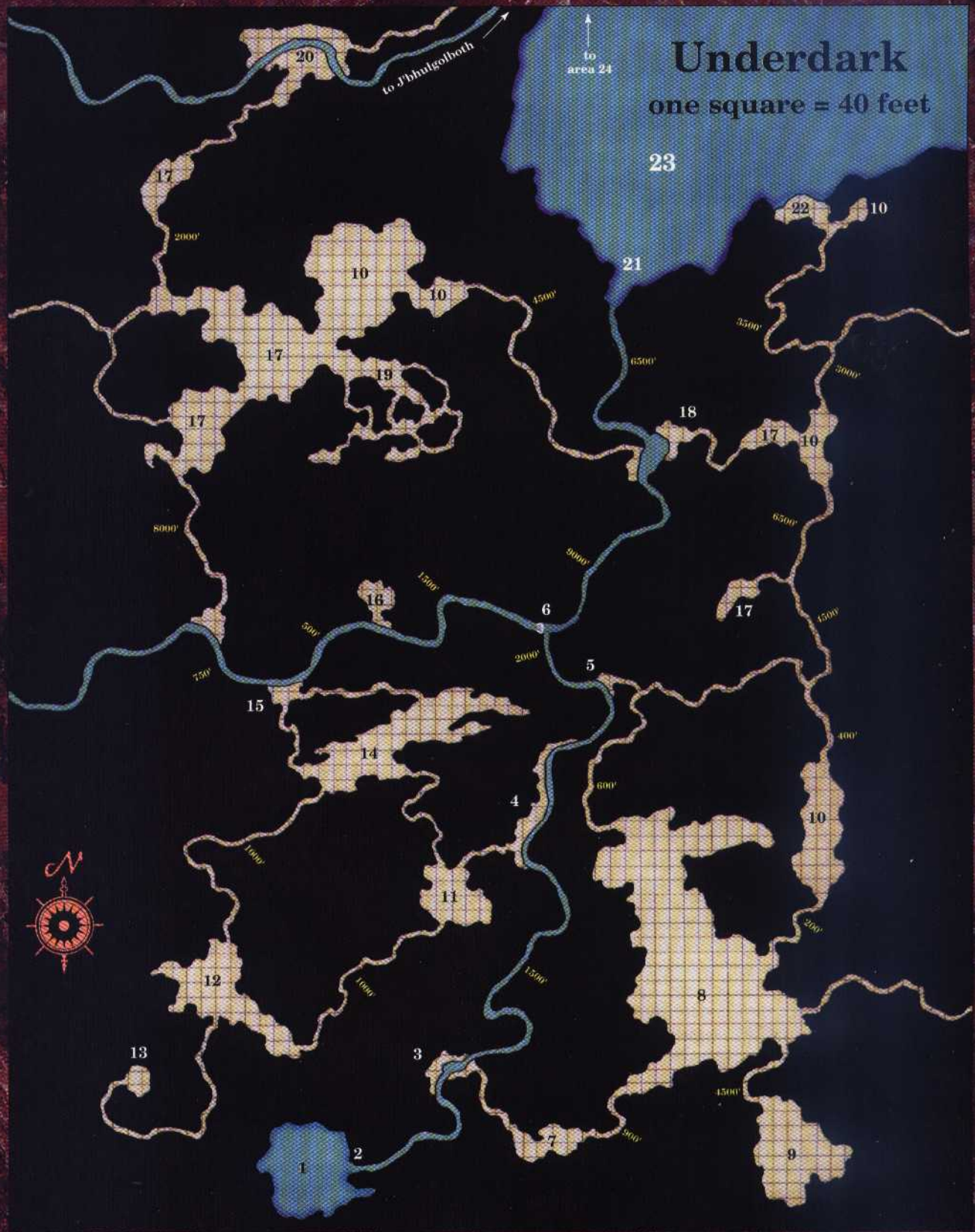
U4. Great Ledge.

A large barren ledge overlooks the river here. The ledge itself rises nearly 40 feet from the river surface. Patches of scarlet fungus cling to the lower ten feet of the walls to either side of the river.

Creature (EL 9 if Yidrith is present): Yidrith the mind flayer often travels to this narrow ledge overlooking the river to gather samples of scarlet rust for his experiments. There is a 35% chance that the illithid is here observing the fungus when the PCs arrive.

Yidrith: hp 51; see area **U13** for complete statistics.

Tactics: If Yidrith notices the PCs' approach, he makes an attempt to *charm* as many of them as possible, hoping to capture living subjects for his experiments. He mind blasts any who resist. If he manages to stun or *charm* most of the party, he collects his *charmed* victims and withdraws to area **U13**.



Values in yellow indicate depth below sea level.

U5. Fungus Beach.

The cavern widens here, creating a low shelf next to the river. This shelf is rife with various kinds of fungus; the scarlet rust dominates the area, but you can see several larger mushrooms growing further back from the bank.

The scarlet rust on this beach is quite thick and fecund; anyone walking through this area kicks up clouds of spores. Those caught in the area at this time must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) or become infested.

Creatures (EL 8): Five shriekers and four violet fungi grow here. If the shriekers wail, check for wandering monsters using the "Random Underdark Encounter" table.

Shriekers (5): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual 93* for full statistics.

Violet Fungi (4): hp 15 each; see *Monster Manual 93* for full statistics.

U6. Waterfall.

The ceiling here rises dramatically, vaulting into the darkness. An impressive, cascading waterfall plummets 50 feet from the west passage. Fresh water from this tributary mixes with the tainted water of the river that flows from the south toward the northeast.

When the Scarlet Tide rose, the river level did not manage to rise high enough to travel up beyond this waterfall into the tributary flowing in from the west. The waterfall and the river beyond are thus pure and free of the fungual taint that plagues the main body of the Skoraknagit River. The ceiling here rises to an impressive 120 feet but drops down to a mere 20 feet above the surface of the river within a mere 60 feet from the waterfall.

This western tributary is shallower (averaging 15 feet deep) and faster than the main branch of the Skoraknagit River.

PCs who can see up to the waterfall's source 50 feet above can make a Spot check (DC 20). Success reveals what appears to be a beautiful suit of studded leather armor caught on a rock outcropping at the edge of the waterfall. Climbing up the slippery rock wall to the mouth of the western tributary requires a successful Climb check (DC 20).

Treasure: Closer inspection reveals that the suit of armor is indeed well made. The armor seems to be unharmed by its immersion and is quite obviously sized for a Medium-sized person, although how it came to be lodged in the rocks above this waterfall is unclear. It is, in fact, a suit of *+2 studded leather of blending*. Bladestorm discarded this armor when she fell into the river at area **U15** so she could swim and avoid drowning. See areas **U14**-**U16** for more details.

U7. Transformed Headhunters.

The passageway widens into a large, damp cave. Water runs in rivulets down the walls in many places, and the ground is obscured by a thick layer of scarlet fungus.

Disturbing this bed of scarlet rust kicks up clouds of spores requiring a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) to resist. A successful Balance check (DC 15) allows safe crossing.

Creatures (EL 5): Three human scarlet children lurk in this cave. All three were part of Bladestorm's band; these three rogues were badly wounded during the battle with the chuul and were left behind while the group continued downriver. Not long after, all three succumbed to the scarlet rust and shambled into this cave to hide.

Scarlet Children, Human Rog1 (3): CR 2; Medium Plant (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8+1; hp 9, 6, 5; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex); Atk +4 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +1 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, short sword); or +3 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); Reach 15 ft. (with tendril only); SA sneak attack (+1d6), infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +5, Gather Information +2, Hide +6, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Search +3, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +2. *Feats:* Dodge, Track.

Possessions: Leather armor, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 12 gp and 20 sp each.

Tactics: These scarlet children are content to simply lurk in this cavern, using their Hide skills to remain hidden amid the scarlet rust. They attack anyone who invades their new home, inadvertently kicking up clouds of spores in the process.

U8. Skellyglur's Lair.

Pools of water dot the uneven floor of this massive cavern, and patches of the ever-present scarlet fungus can be seen forming low mounds here and there. A strong musty animal stink fills the air, overpowering the nasty undercurrent of fungus. Half of Narwell could probably fit into this cave, but aside from the fungus it seems devoid of life.

Should combat occur in this cave, combatants must make a Dexterity check (DC 10) on their initiative turn to avoid stumbling into a patch of scarlet rust and triggering a spore cloud eruption. Creatures that don't move or those that move via flight do not have to make this check.

Creature (EL 12): This immense cavern has been the lair of an incredibly old behir for many years. The creature's hardiness and excellent Fortitude saving throw allow it to drink from the tainted water of the Skoraknagit River without fear of being infested by the scarlet rust. Nevertheless, it has considered moving to a new lair deeper in the Underdark, since it cannot digest the scarlet fungus and, of late, that seems to be the only thing to eat.

Skellyglur, Ancient Behir: CR 8*; Gargantuan Magical Beast (Electrical) (60 ft. long); HD 15d10+105; hp 204; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft, climb 15 ft.; AC 18 (-4 size, +1 Dex, +11 natural); Atk +27 melee (2d6+12, bite), +25 melee (1d6+6 [×6], claws); Face 10 ft. × 30 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA breath weapon (10d6), improved grab, swallow whole, constrict (4d6+12); SQ electricity immunity, scent, can't be tripped; AL N; SV Fort +16, Ref +10, Will +7; Str 34, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +32, Hide +8, Spot +11. *Feats:* Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack.

* Skellyglur is larger and has more Hit Dice than common behirs. Award +66% XP for defeating the monster.

Tactics: Skellyglur is rather intelligent for its kind, so it knows to watch intruders in its lair for a few minutes to gauge

their strengths and time its attack for when its victims have let down their guard. The beast is quite hungry, but not hungry enough to endanger its life needlessly; if reduced to fewer than 35 hit points, it attempts to flee into the deeper caverns of the Underdark, abandoning its treasure.

This is possibly the most dangerous encounter the PCs will have to face in the tunnels. If the party has had a tough time up to this point, you might decide that the behir is out hunting in the deeper caverns. If, on the other hand, the party is doing well, perhaps this encounter will prove to be a better challenge for them.

Treasure: Skellyglur has collected a respectable mound of treasure, which it keeps in a hollow niche under a 13-foot-tall stalagmite in the center of the cave. A successful Search check (DC 20) made in the center of this cave reveals that the stalagmite has been broken off at the base and does not perfectly cover the hollow chamber underneath. The stalagmite weighs about 25,000 lbs. It is little problem for the behir to tip it aside, but a Medium-sized character must have a minimum Strength of 39 to do the same! Shattering the stalagmite isn't much easier, as it has a Hardness of 8 and 1,800 hit points; without the aid of magic (such as *stone shape* or *gaseous form* spells), the PCs won't be able to get to the treasure.

Those who do manage to bypass the stalagmite find that the treasure is worth the trouble. It consists of 6,000 sp, 850 gp, six violet garnets (400 gp each), a gold ring (900 gp), a pair of silver earrings (200 gp), a golden goblet (200 gp), a tarnished silver bracelet (100 gp), a masterwork scimitar, a *potion of hiding*, an arcane scroll of *blindness/deafness*, a *wand of fireball* (7th level; 18 charges; command word "Vortifax"), *+4 bracers of armor*, a *belt of dwarvenkind*, and a *+2 heavy mace of disruption*. The magic mace is adorned with symbols of Pelor, the sun god.

Ug. Ancient Fane of the Dark God. The passageway leading to this large cave from the behir lair slopes downward at an alarming angle. A successful Spot check (DC 10) allows one to realize that this tunnel was originally an artificial stairway, but time has eroded it into a smooth slope. As the tunnel continues, the temperature begins to drop dramatically. By the time it widens into this cavern, the moisture on the floors and walls has become ice.

This large cavern is a thing of cold beauty. The entire place is covered with a fine coating of frost. Frozen puddles dot the floor, and thankfully there isn't a spot of scarlet fungus to be seen. The ceiling looms out of sight. Despite the quiet of this immense cavern, the sight of it fills you with chills and feelings of despair and fear. Perhaps it is merely the unnatural cold, or perhaps it is something far more sinister lurking within the darkness before you.

Hundreds of years ago, this cavern served as the doorstep for a large hidden temple devoted to the dark god Tharizdun. This terrible deity was imprisoned long ago, and his cultists were scattered and severed from the source of their unholy power, but a few of his temples managed to escape destruction at the hands of the forces of good. Tharizdun was a god who promoted despair, darkness, insanity, and numbing cold; his cultists were known as terrorists and vile killers.

Although Tharizdun's time has long since passed, his temples remain dens of evil. This cavern and the temple beyond were enchanted by powerful divine magic to radiate a terrible cold. As a result, the temperature in this cave hovers at just below -10° F. Unprotected PCs must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) once every 10 minutes, taking 1d6 points of subdual damage on each failed save. A PCs who has ranks in

Wilderness Lore gains a +2 competence bonus to this save and can apply this bonus to other PCs as well. PCs wearing winter clothing need to make this saving throw only once per hour.

If the PCs opt to explore this cave, they encounter no dangers aside from the numbing cold. Deeper in the cave they find huge blocks of ice; inside some of these blocks are disturbing, frozen forms. PCs who make it to the far end of the cave find a huge, leering demonic face carved into the wall. This face is nearly 60 feet high and covered with ice. The yawning mouth looks like it once opened into a passageway, but it is now completely clogged with ice. Penetrating this block of ice should not be easy to do; beyond lies the ruins of the temple proper.

Development: DMs who wish to expand the scope of this adventure should feel free to detail the ruined temple and decide what manner of creatures are imprisoned in the blocks of ice. Needless to say, the temple itself should be a dangerous and terrifying area for characters to explore.

U10. Fungal Jungle.

You have entered a long cavern. The air is humid and thick with a fungal stink, for the cave floor is a glistening jungle of mushrooms, mold, and slime.

There are several of these encounters in this region of the Underdark. Each of these caverns is infested with fungus, dangerous and otherwise. Yellow mold, brown mold, phantom fungi, green slime, and the ever-present scarlet rust can be found in abundance here. In addition, there is a chance that several scarlet children are present as well.

Creatures (EL see below): Each time one of these caverns is entered, roll 1d4 times on the following table to determine the opposition the PCs face. There are always 2d6 patches of scarlet rust present in each of these caves. If the PCs overcome this encounter and then proceed to exit the cavern, no further rolls are needed.

d20 Roll	Result
1-3	**Patch of Yellow Mold (EL 6).** See page 117 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.
4-5	**Patch of Brown Mold (EL 2).** See page 117 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.
6-8	**Patch of Green Slime (EL 4).** See page 117 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.
9-16	**Scarlet Children (EL varies).** Roll 1d20 and consult the "Random Underdark Encounter" sidebar.
17-20	No encounter.

Treasure: Aside from possible equipment carried by scarlet children, there is no treasure in any of these caverns.

U11. Battlefield.

This damp cavern is spotted here and there with the scarlet fungus. Nearby lie the bodies of seven monstrous scorpions; each is infested with the scarlet fungus.

Bladestorm and her Headhunters encountered these Large scorpions not long after climbing up from the river into area U4. The Headhunters managed to kill all of the scorpions, but not before they were all infested with the scarlet rust.

U12. Stalagmite Forest.

This low cavern is little more than 10 feet high. Visibility is limited by thousands of stalagmites and stalactites, many of which have grown together into columns. It appears that the scarlet fungus has not yet spread to this cave, although you do spy a few tiny patches of the stuff near the entrance.

Visibility in this cave is limited to 30 feet, due to the densely packed stalagmites and stalactites.

Creature (EL 9 if Yidrith is present): Yidrith can sometimes be encountered here (10% chance) as he is coming or going from area U4 or U14.

Yidrith: hp 51; see area U13 for complete statistics.

Tactics: Yidrith's tactics are described in area U4.

U13. Yidrith's Lair.

This cavern is completely free of the scarlet taint. Majestic flowstone sculptures and large deposits of softly glowing crystals give this place an alien beauty.

Creature (EL 9): If it hasn't been encountered and defeated already, Yidrith the mind flayer is found here. Many years ago, this unusually chaotic illithid was forced to flee when his plans to usurp control over one of his home city's factions was discovered. Since then, Yidrith has harbored a growing resentment for his kind and longs for vengeance. Yidrith believes it has found the method for this vengeance in the scarlet rust. For the past several days, the illithid has been studying the fungus, trying to discover a method to increase the potency of its spores and then introduce them into his home city, transforming his hated kin into shambling fungal parodies. Yidrith has just started to realize that victims of the scarlet rust are nowhere near as mindless as he initially assumed and is about ready to abandon its research in favor of something new.

Yidrith, Mind Flayer Wiz1: CR 9; Medium-Size Aberration (6 ft. tall); HD 8d8+8 (illithid) plus 1d4+1 (Wiz); hp 51; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +4 *mage armor*, +2 deflection); Atk +8 melee (1d4+1 [×4], tentacle); or +3 melee (1d4 plus infestation, injector rifle); SA mind blast, psionics, improved grab, extract, scarlet rust syringe; SQ telepathy; SR 25; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 17.

Skills: Alchemy +10, Bluff +9, Concentration +14, Hide +13, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +16, Move Silently +13, Spellcraft +6, Spot +16. *Feats:* Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse (tentacle).

Wizard Spells (3/2): 0—*detect magic, ghost sound, read magic;* 1st—*expeditious retreat, mage armor.*

Possessions: +2 ring of protection, potion of cure moderate wounds, clear spindle *ioun stone* (sustains Yidrith without food or water), *periapt of health,* injector rifle, 6 syringes filled with scarlet rust concentrate (see **Tactics** below), pouch of three pearls (100 gp each), platinum and gold snake armband with sapphire eyes (5,000 gp), silver magnifying glass set with aquamarines (1,600 gp).

Tactics: Yidrith does not immediately attack intruders in his lair; rather, he invites them to sit and relax during a free trade of information. The illithid wants to know what the party has

discovered about the scarlet fungus and is willing to trade what it has learned in return. It can warn the PCs about the scarlet children in area **U14** and can also tell them that the fungal plague seems to have originated in J'bhulgolboth, a nearby kuo-toa settlement devastated by the fungal attack. Yidrith tried to explore the ruins the day before but was forced to flee when it encountered heavy opposition from scarlet children resistant to its mind blast.

Unfortunately for the party, Yidrith has no intention of letting them go. Once it has learned what information it thinks the heroes possess, the illithid mind blasts them in an attempt to gain more subjects for its experiments.

PCs who are captured by Yidrith are in serious trouble. The illithid keeps them tightly bound and gagged if they prove resistant to *charm person*. It then uses its injector rifle (1d4/crit ×2; 5 lb.) to administer a potent scarlet rust concentrate. Anyone injected with this concentrate must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) or become infested. Once death occurs, the illithid moves the infested bodies to area **U11** and observes them from afar. Yidrith can use his injector rifle and reload it with another syringe in 1 round; reloading the rifle is treated as a partial action.

If he is attacked on sight, Yidrith counters with his mind blast, *charm monster*, and *suggestion* attacks. If the PCs prove resistant to such tactics, Yidrith casts *expeditious retreat* and tries to flee.

Treasure: Tucked away in a natural recess in the floor is Yidrith's modest alchemical lab: a collection of crystal beakers and flasks arranged atop a crude stone table. Several flasks are coated with scarlet rust that the illithid has been studying. PCs can recover twenty-three crystal beakers and flasks; each is worth 30 gp intact.

Resting on the table is Yidrith's "spellbook"—actually a collection of eight 4-inch-square adamantine plates embossed with strange bars and dashes. These tactile runes are part of the illithid written language, or Quiddith. Each plate contains a wizard spell, as can be determined by a *read magic* spell:

0—*detect magic, ghost sound, ray of frost, read magic;*

1st—*expeditious retreat, identify, mage armor, silent image.*

Development: If the PCs battle Yidrith before reaching this cavern, it is 80% likely that the illithid has gathered its gear and departed the area.

U14. Headhunters' Last Stand.

The air in this large cavern is moist. The floor of the cavern is covered with a carpet of scarlet fungus, with stalagmites forming rocky islands. A large mound of the fungus lies in the center of the cavern.

This cavern was once the lair of a particularly large destrachan that had succumbed to the scarlet rust. When Bladestorm and her group entered this cavern, the beast attacked at once. Nearly all of her followers were slain in the resulting battle, but Bladestorm managed to slay the creature in the end. Horrified at the result of the battle, she knew that in her weakened state she would never make the return journey back to Narwell to warn her superiors about the spread of the scarlet fungus throughout these caverns. She retreated into a narrow alcove along the north wall of the cave and tried to rest so she could replenish her spells.

Unfortunately, Bladestorm's rest was interrupted as her fellow Headhunters rose as scarlet children and attacked her. Bladestorm was forced to flee to area **U15**, where she stumbled and fell into the river. After removing her armor and dropping her weapons, she managed to swim to area **U16**, where she collapsed from exhaustion. She remains there still.

The entire floor of this cavern is covered with scarlet rust. Walking, running, or otherwise disturbing the rust causes it to expel clouds of infectious spores unless a successful Balance check (DC 15) is made.

Creatures (EL 9): The last remnants of Bladestorm's band lurk in the eastern half of this cavern. They are perched on a 40-foot-long shelf located 10 feet above the main floor and try to remain hidden until PCs pass nearby, at which point they lash out with their scarlet rust tendrils. Then they rain arrows down on the PCs. Reaching the shelf without the aid of magic requires a successful Climb check (DC 15).

Scarlet Child, Male Human Rog5: CR 6; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 5d8+10; hp 38; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 magic *leather armor*); Atk +8 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +7 melee (1d6+2/crit 18-20, *+1 rapier* with Weapon Finesse feat); or +6 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); Reach 15 ft. (tendril attack only); SA sneak attack (+3d6), infestation, breath weapon; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +9, Escape Artist +11, Gather Information +7, Hide +11, Intuit Direction +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +5, Spot +9, Swim +3, Tumble +9, Use Magic Device +4. *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

Possessions: +1 leather armor, +1 rapier, shortbow with 5 arrows, 38 gp and 16 sp in pouch.

Scarlet Children, Male Human Rgr2 (3): CR 3; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 2d8+4; hp 18, 16, 13; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 masterwork studded leather) or 15 (with Dodge feat); Atk +3 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +1 melee (1d8+2/19-20 crit, masterwork longsword), +0 melee (1d6+2/crit 19-20, short sword); or +3 ranged (1d8/crit ×3, longbow); Reach 15 ft. (tendril attack only); SA favored enemy (orc), Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting (in light armor only), infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +4, Swim +6, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Track.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork longsword, short sword, longbow with 1d6 arrows each.

Scarlet Children, Male Human Rgr1 (4): CR 2; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. 11 in. tall); HD 1d8+2; hp 9, 7, 6, 5; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather) or 15 (with Dodge feat); Atk +2 ranged (infestation, tendril); +1 melee (1d8+2/crit 19-20, longsword), +1 melee (1d6+2/crit 19-20, short sword); or +2 ranged (1d8/crit ×3, longbow); Reach 15 ft. (tendril attack only); SA favored enemy (orc), Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon fighting (in light armor only), infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Ride +3, Spot +3, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +2. *Feats:* Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Track.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, longsword, short sword, longbow with 1d6 arrows each, 2d4 gp each.

Tactics: If they notice the party's approach, these scarlet children attempt to hide against the uneven, fungus encrusted surfaces of the shelf in an attempt to surprise the PCs. Once combat begins, the scarlet children fight to the death.

In melee combat, the 1st-level rangers use the aid another action (see page 135 of the *Player's Handbook*) to increase the chances of their higher-level comrades striking the PCs. The 5th-level rogue takes advantage of any flanking opportunities to make sneak attacks.

U15. Fungus Beach. This beach is similar to area U5 in every way, except that when Bladestorm passed this way she killed one of the violet fungi to clear a path to the river. A successful Spot check (DC 12) discovers her tracks in the mud on the river bank near the rapidly decaying violet fungus.

Treasure: PCs who state that they are searching the river can make a Search check (DC 20) to discover the three weapons Bladestorm discarded after fleeing into the river. This includes a *+1 keen longsword*, a *+2 longsword*, and a *+2 composite longbow of distance*. All three of these weapons are unique in appearance; a successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 25) or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 20) reveals that the weapons belong to the famous Headhunter, Bladestorm.

U16. Bladestorm's Refuge.

The entrance to this cavern forms a small ledge about 5 feet above the river's surface. The cave is small and cramped, and the ceiling averages a mere 4 feet high. A still form lies huddled against the far wall.

The huddled figure is the cleric/ranger Bladestorm. She has so far managed to resist the infectious scarlet rust, but she has lost most of her Constitution to scarlet children breath weapons and violet fungi. She is resting so that she can prepare spells to restore her lost Constitution and return to Narwell.

Creature (EL 12): Bladestorm is in a deep, exhausted sleep when the party enters this cavern. She has rested enough to prepare spells, but unless an outside agent awakens her, she continues to sleep for several more hours. If awakened, she is first terrified and then ecstatic at seeing non-fungoid beings. She wants to trade stories with the PCs; upon hearing of their adventures, she volunteers to prepare any clerical spells they might need (such as *cure* spells, *remove disease, lesser restoration*, and the like). If the PCs have recovered and return her armor and weapons (from areas **U6** and **U15** respectively), she is grateful and offers one of the four items to the PCs as a reward.

In any case, Bladestorm wishes to return to Narwell and apprise her captain of the state of things beneath the city. She agrees to bring Captain Timane any messages from the party. If you feel that the PCs need additional firepower, Bladestorm might decide to join forces with them for the remainder of the adventure, or at least until the PCs reach J'bhulgolboth.

Bladestorm is attractive, with blonde hair and blue eyes. She is well known in Narwell as one of the most dangerous and successful Headhunters. She worships Tritherion, a chaotic good deity of vengeance and liberty. Normally she works alone, since her impetuous attitude tends to rub most people the wrong way, but when Captain Timane practically begged her to lead a band of fellow Headhunters into the caverns below Narwell, she accepted. She has since come to regret her decision.

Bladestorm, Female Half-elf Clr6/Rgr6: CR 12; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 3 in.); HD 6d8 (Clr) plus 6d10 (Rgr); hp 62 (currently 14 due to Constitution drain); Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 deflection); Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d6+4/crit 19-20, *+1 short sword*); SA spells, turn undead, favored enemies (+2 vs. orcs, +1 vs. undead), Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting (in light armor only); SQ immune to *sleep* spells, +2 racial bonus to saves against Enchantment spells or effects, low-light vision; AL CG; SV Fort +10 (currently +6 due to Constitution loss), Ref +8, Will +10; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 10 (currently 3), Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Animal Empathy +6, Climb +8, Concentration +12 (currently +8 due to Constitution loss), Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +6, Heal +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +9, Ride +10, Use Rope +8, Search +9, Spellcraft +9, Spot +9, Swim +8, Wilderness Lore +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Leadership, Mobility, Spring Attack, Track.

Possessions: +1 ring of protection, +1 short sword, four *+2 arrows*, five masterwork arrows, *amulet of mirror image* (allows its wearer to cast *mirror image* as a standard action 1/day).

Cleric Spells (5/4+1/4+1/3+1): 0—*create water, detect magic, detect poison, light, mending;* 1st—*bless, detect evil, divine favor, protection from evil, sanctuary*;* 2nd—*bull's strength, lesser restoration* (×2), *shield other*, spiritual weapon;* 3rd—*continual flame, dispel magic, protection from elements*, remove disease.*

* Domain spells. *Domains:* Protection (*protective ward* 1/day grants target +6 resistance bonus on its next saving throw; duration 1 hour), Strength (feat of strength 1/day).

Ranger Spells (2): 1st—*delay poison, summon nature's ally I.*

U17. Scarlet Child Lair. These caverns that have been recently colonized by scarlet children.

Each cave is dotted with patches of scarlet rust. Should combat occur, each combatant must make a Dexterity check (DC 10) on their initiative turn to avoid stumbling into a patch of scarlet rust and possibly triggering a spore cloud eruption. Creatures that don't move or those that move entirely via flight do not have to make this check.

Creatures (EL varies): Each time the party enters one of these caves, roll 1d20 and consult the "Random Underdark Encounters" table to determine what lurks here.

Development: If the PCs return to a cave they've previously cleared out, make an immediate wandering monster check (roll d% on the "Random Underdark Encounters" table) to determine whether a new scarlet child or group of scarlet children has moved into the cave.

U18. Checkpoint (EL 9).

The river collects into a large pool that bisects a cavern. The surface of the pool is completely caked with scarlet rust, and the foul fungus has spread onto dry land, the walls, and even the ceiling.

Creatures (EL 9): Before the rising of the Scarlet Tide, this area was a guard station of the city of J'bhulgolboth. The Scarlet Tide transformed the kuo-toa stationed here. This small force of scarlet children consists of two 2nd-level kuo-toa fighters and their leader, a monitor (a 4th-level monk).

Should combat take place in this cave, each combatant must make a Dexterity check (DC 10) on their initiative turn to avoid stumbling into a patch of scarlet rust and triggering a spore cloud eruption. Creatures that don't move or those that move entirely via flight do not have to make this check.

Scarlet Children Kuo-toa Ftr2 (4): CR 5; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. tall); HD 4d8+19 (includes Toughness feat); hp 32 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft, swim 50 ft.; AC 20 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +3 studded leather armor, +2 large shield); Atk +5 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +9 melee (1d8+2/crit ×3, shortspear with Weapon Focus), +3 melee (1d4, bite); or +8 ranged (1d8+2/crit ×3, shortspear with Weapon Focus); SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease*, keen sight, slippery, adhesive, poison and paralysis immunity, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious; AL NE; SV Fort +12 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +4, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +5, Craft (weaponsmith) +6, Escape Artist +19, Jump +5, Listen +11 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +4, Search +10, Spot +13 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, shortspear, large steel shield, net pouch containing 1d4 50-gp gems.

Monitor, Kuo-toa Scarlet Child Mnk4 (1): CR 7; Medium-Size Plant (6 ft. tall); HD 6d8+12; hp 39; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft, swim 50 ft.; AC 20 (+3 Dex, +3 Wis, +4 natural); Atk +9 ranged (infestation, tendril) or 22 (with Dodge feat); or +7 melee (1d8+2, unarmed strike), +2 melee (1d4, bite); SA infestation, breath weapon, unarmed strike, stunning attack 4/day (DC 15 Fortitude save); SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease*, keen sight, slippery, poison and paralysis immunity, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious, evasion, still mind (+2 resistance bonus to spells and effects from the Enchantment school), slow fall (20 ft.); AL NE; SV Fort +11 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +12 (includes Lightning Reflexes feat), Will +12; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 7.

Skills: Balance +7, Escape Artist +21, Hide +13, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +11 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +12, Search +9, Spot +13 (includes Alertness feat), Tumble +9. *Feats:* Alertness, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes.

Possessions: Ring of jumping, potion of cure moderate wounds, 3 black pearls (500 gp each) in net pouch.

Tactics: The three kuo-toa scarlet children lurk below the surface of the pool, waiting to ambush anything that enters it. A PC who makes a Spot check (opposed by the scarlet children's Hide checks) notices the attack in time to act; all others are caught by surprise when the scarlet children burst from the surface of the pool to attack. This causes the scarlet rust to explode into spores, of course; anyone within 10 feet of one of the scarlet children must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 10) to resist.

Development: If these scarlet children are slain, the guard post remains abandoned. The scarlet children have no real interest in keeping it occupied.

U19. Svirfneblin Barricade.

This cavern is exceptionally short; the ceiling is a mere 4 feet high. Several small passageways branch off from the cavern; each has been partially blocked with carefully piled mounds of rubble. The scarlet fungus has yet to taint this area with its presence.

A small band of svirfneblin gnomes from an underground city to the west recently came to spy on the city of J'bhulgolboth. They arrived the day after the Scarlet Tide rose and were horrified by what they found. They tried to hurry back to their home city but were attacked by a band of kuo-toa scarlet children. Several of the gnomes perished, and the remaining five have retreated to these caverns to recuperate and plan their escape.

Aside from the gnomes, these caves hold nothing of interest, although they can serve as an easily defendable hideout for the PCs should the need arise.

Creatures (EL 5): At least one svirfneblin stands guard at all times, watching this cavern from beyond one of the barricaded tunnel entrances. Upon sighting surface dwellers, the guard becomes very excited and retreats squealing into the tunnels to gather his companions. The gnomes cautiously approach the PCs, unsure whether they are agents or victims of the Scarlet Tide. They use their Sense Motive skill to gauge the party's intentions; if they like what they see, the gnomes beg to be led from these cursed caverns so they can warn their kin to the west of the terrible events. If the party agrees, the gnomes require an escort from this cavern through the large cavern directly to the west and then down the tunnel that leads off the map nearby. Once the gnomes are a mile from these caves, they feel safe to continue on their own. They reward the PCs with all of their monetary wealth, then scamper west down the tunnel.

Male and Female Svirfneblin Gnome Rog1 (5): CR 1; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 1d6; hp 6 each; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+2 Dex, +1 size, +3 studded leather armor, +4 dodge); Atk +0 melee (1d6-1/crit 19-20, short sword); or +2 ranged (1d4, dart); SA spells (*blindness, blur,* and *change self* each 1/day), sneak attack (+1d6); SQ speak with animals, *nondetection,* darkvision 120 ft.; SR 12; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +3, Balance +6, Climb +1, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +4 (+6 underground), Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Search +5, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Tumble +6, Use Magic Device +3. *Feat:* Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger, pouch containing 1d6 gems (50 gp each).

U20. Abandoned Guard Post.

This large cavern is bisected by a swiftly flowing river. A small stone fort stands against the east wall of the cave.

This cave once served as a guard station for J'bhulgolboth. When the Scarlet Tide rose, the kuo-toa stationed here fled upriver, abandoning their kin to their fate. Nothing of value remains in the fort. The river that flows through this cavern empties into the Fungus Lake (area U23). The water is fairly fresh; its rapid flow keeps the scarlet rust from tainting it.

U21. Entrance to the Fungus Lake.

A sickening red glow lurks around the next bend in the river. As you round the bend, the river widens suddenly into an immense underground lake covered with a thick, rippled sheet of scarlet fungus. The air here is hazy with spores and glows with a muted scarlet light.

Characters cannot proceed into this area via boat or raft. The fungus that covers the water is thick enough for creatures of up to Large size to walk on without breaking.

U22. Ruined Monastery.

A domed building stands on the shore of an underground lake covered in thick scarlet fungus. Its walls have been shrouded in fungus, and the building looks deserted.

This building was once a monastery populated by a militant sect of kuo-toa monitors. All of the monitors that dwelt here were at least 5th level and thus immune to the scarlet rust. They mounted an impressive defense against the Tide but, in the end, were simply overwhelmed as more and more of their kin from J'bhulgolboth were transformed. This building now stands empty and silent. Feel free to expand this monastery as part of an ongoing Underdark campaign.

U23. Fungal Lake. This region is where the Scarlet Lord is currently imprisoned; the lake is covered by a thick skin of fungus. See area J1 below for details.

U24. J'bhulgolboth. The ruined kuo-toa city of J'bhulgolboth is located here, on the edge of the great Fungal Lake; this fungus infested ruin is detailed below.

City of J'bhulgolboth (Areas J1-J19)

Until recently, this city once housed over 350 kuo-toa and was one of the more important locations on the Underdark trade routes. Drow, illithids, duergar, derro, and even aboleth visited the city regularly to trade or purchase slaves. This came to a sudden end when Xhagevoxhab's attempted escape raised the water level of the lake and flooded the city with fungus-tainted water. Now, the city is quiet, its buildings covered with thick layers of scarlet fungus and its waterways silenced and clogged with mold.

Although the city looks empty, it is far from abandoned. The kuo-toa and many of the visiting creatures were transformed into scarlet children during the Scarlet Tide. They now lurk in the shadows, awaiting the coming of their Scarlet Lord, at which time they embark on a bloody crusade throughout the Underdark to rebuild Xhagevoxhab's Scarlet Empire.

The fungus in the air provides a dim ambient scarlet light. As the PCs approach the city, play up the alien nature of the location. A kuo-toa city is a disturbing sight, with twisted towers, spires, and bulbous structures looming out of the darkness like massive sea monsters. The addition of the scarlet rust makes the place more terrifying.

The scarlet children of J'bhulgolboth are confident that the coming of their Scarlet Lord is only a short time off. This confidence might prove to be the greatest advantage the heroes have over them, since the scarlet children won't rise up to defend J'bhulgolboth unless it is attacked by a large armed force. A small group of adventurers will be all but ignored as they enter the city. Wandering monsters do not occur in J'bhulgolboth. Exploring the ruined buildings in the city is a different matter, however, for many of them are occupied by various scarlet children. While they might allow outsiders to wander the streets, they won't suffer intrusions into their homes and defend them vigorously.

Scarlet Children in the City

Most of the scarlet children in J'bhulgolboth are normal kuo-toa, and their statistics are given in the "Scarlet Rust" sidebar at the end of the adventure. Other common types of scarlet children found in the city are listed below. Use them to craft encounters as you see fit, and feel free to create other kinds of scarlet children to populate J'bhulgolboth.

The following table provides easy, challenging, and hard encounters for a group of four 9th-level PCs.

Difficulty	Roll d%	Encounter	EL
Easy	01-50	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa (4)	7
	51-75	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2 (2)	7
	76-90	Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Rog5 (1)	8
	91-00	Scarlet Child, Chuul (1)	8
Challenging	01-40	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa (9)	9
	41-70	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2 (4) Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Mnk4 (1)	9
	71-85	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa (3) Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Rog5 (1)	10
	86-00	Scarlet Children, Chuuls (2)	10
Hard	01-40	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa (4) Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2 (2) Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Mnk4 (1)	11
	41-80	Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2 (2) Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Rog5 (1)	11
	81-00	Scarlet Children, Chuuls (3)	11

Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2: See area **J6** for complete statistics. There is a 70% chance that the scarlet child has 5th-level treasure; roll randomly on Table 7-4 on page 170 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, ignoring coins.

Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Monitor Mnk4: See area **J6** for complete statistics. There is an 80% chance that the scarlet child has 7th-level treasure; roll randomly on Table 7-4 on page 170 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, ignoring coins.

Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Slayer Rog5: CR 8; Medium-size Plant (5 ft. tall); HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft, swim 50 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +2 leather armor); Atk +10 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +9 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, masterwork short sword and Weapon Finesse feat), +1 melee (1d4, bite); SA infestation, breath weapon, sneak attack (+3d6); SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease*, keen sight, slippery, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious, evasion, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +7 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +10, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +9, Bluff +3, Climb +6, Decipher Script +7, Escape Artist +21, Gather Information +3, Hide +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +13 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +11, Search +14, Spot +13 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (short sword).

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork short sword, *potion of blur*, net pouch containing 1d4 black pearls (500 gp each).

Scarlet Child, Chuul: Consult the "Random Underdark Encounters" table for complete statistics. A chuul carries no treasure.

Clues in J'bhulgolboth

In certain areas, the text indicates that clues to recent events might be found by searching. When such clues are found, roll a d12 and consult the following table to determine what sort of information the clues impart. Most clues appear in the form of fragments of stone bearing carvings or runes; some require a successful Decipher Script (DC 20) or knowledge of the kuo-toa language to understand.

Roll	Clue
1	Long ago, this region was ruled by a fungal beast known as Xhagevoxhab, the Scarlet Lord.
2	The Scarlet Lord's army was defeated by an army of drow and kuo-toa over 600 years ago. The Scarlet Lord was imprisoned in a lake with a set of magically crafted chains. There it remained for hundreds of years.
3	This city of J'bhulgolboth was founded by a powerful kuo-toa priest named Sifkhu. Sifkhu built the magic chains that imprisoned the Scarlet Lord.
4	Several decades ago, the Scarlet Lord was partially released and sent forth waves of scarlet fungus to infest the region.
5	The priests of J'bhulgolboth repulsed the Scarlet Lord's attacks with spells left behind by Sifkhu—spells inscribed on a set of magic tablets.
6	The five Sifkhu Tablets were kept in a reliquary accessed from a massive submerged canyon deep beneath the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp. The Crown is the main temple in J'bhulgolboth.
7	The Scarlet Lord awakens periodically. In each previous instance, the city's priests would use the tablets to banish it again. Great festivals followed each successful defeat of the Scarlet Lord.
8	Those infested by the scarlet fungus became slaves of the Scarlet Lord.
9	Entrance into the lower vaults of the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp can be gained through the River of the Dead, which can be entered only from the uppermost chambers in the Crown.
10	The deep vaults under the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp are flooded; to protect themselves from the water pressure, visiting priests wore magical robes made of fish scales.
11	The Crown of Blibdoolpoolp is protected by magic auras and traps that are powered by magic rooms in the crypts.
12	The city was recently attacked by a large force of drow. The Scarlet Tide rose and decimated the city while it was recovering from the drow attack.

J1. Fungus Lake. The Skoraknagit River eventually empties into a huge underground lake under which Xhagevoxhab was imprisoned long ago. Now, the entire lake has been transformed as the ancient beast slowly works its way free from the magical chains that bind it.

The surface of the lake is covered over by a thick shell of scarlet rust; this shell undulates softly as the water below ripples; it is nonetheless quite sturdy and can be walked upon by Medium-size or smaller creatures. Walking over this surface triggers many spore cloud explosions, but this is really inconsequential since this entire cavern is filled with spores. Living, breathing creatures must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 10) every 10 minutes spent in this cavern or be infested with scarlet rust. Beings with at least a +9 bonus to their Fortitude check and beings that are immune to disease need not worry about infestation. Wrapping a cloth around the mouth and nose grants a +2 bonus to Fortitude saving throws to resist infestation.

The city of J'bhulgolboth is located on the northwestern shore of the lake, about a mile from where the river empties into the massive lake. The lake itself is roughly circular in shape, and is almost 2 miles in diameter.

Creatures (EL 7): Before the coming of the Scarlet Tide, this lake was home to a variety of wildlife. The most fearsome were Huge subterranean sharks; these creatures have since been transformed into scarlet children. PCs who walk on the surface of the Fungus Lake are detected by a pair of scarlet sharks before long, and the beasts attack from below with surprise, bursting through the shell in an attempt to grab victims and retreat to feed. A scarlet shark must make a successful Listen check to notice something walking on the surface; this check is automatically successful against beings who are not taking care to Move Silently.

Scarlet Children, Huge Sharks (2): CR 5; Huge Plant (24 ft. long); HD 10d8+30; hp 75 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd swim 60 ft.; AC 13 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +12 ranged (infestation, tendril); +10 melee (2d6+7, bite); Face 10 ft. × 20 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ keen scent, plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease;* AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 1.

Skills: Spot +7, Listen +7.

J2. Waterfall. This river plummets 80 feet from an opening above. The water in a 200-foot radius around this area is open and pure. Scarlet sharks detest this region and do not enter it.

J3. Southern Guard Post. Visitors were made to wait here while guards from the city wall appraised them and eventually turned them away or granted them access to the marketplace.

Stone Walls: The walls surrounding J'bhulgolboth are made of stone blocks and are 10 feet wide and 15 feet high. Gatehouses consist of a large metal portcullis that can be raised by a wheel on the inside of the wall.

J4. Northern Guard Post. This guard post saw the most traffic to and from the city. The area is empty now.

J5. Marketplace.

This large open area is in a shambles. Ruined booths and torn tents lie everywhere along with smashed wagons and chunks of stone.

This area was where the bulk of the drow attack on the city was fought. The attack drove away most of the merchants who visited the city, so it was relatively empty when the Scarlet Tide rose. Now, the marketplace is a rubble-strewn wasteland.

The various buildings found in this area were permanent shops run by kuo-toa merchants; visiting merchants had to ply their wares from tents or booths. The largest building was where the kuo-toa sold slaves.

J6. Slave Isle.

This fungus-shrouded island is completely enclosed by city walls. A low stone building sits on the southern shore of the island. The rest of the island is dotted with small stone pens.

Slaves were the chief export of J'bhulgolboth; they were kept in pens on this island until they were ready to be sold.

Creatures (EL 9): The slave-keepers (who lived in the stone building on the island) used a *folding boat* to ferry slaves over the water when necessary. They are now scarlet children and still dwell in the stone building.

Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Ftr2 (4): CR 5; Medium-Size Plant (5 ft. tall); HD 4d8+16; hp 29 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft, swim 50 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +4 scale mail armor); Atk +5 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +9 melee (1d10, pincer staff with Weapon Focus), +3 melee (1d4, bite); or +8 melee (1d10+2, pincer staff with Weapon Focus); SA infestation, breath weapon, pincer staff; SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease,* keen sight, slippery, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious; AL NE; SV Fort +12 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +4, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +1*, Craft (weaponsmith) +6, Escape Artist +15*, Jump +1*, Listen +11 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +0*, Search +10, Spot +13 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (pincer staff), Weapon Focus (pincer staff). * Includes armor check penalty.

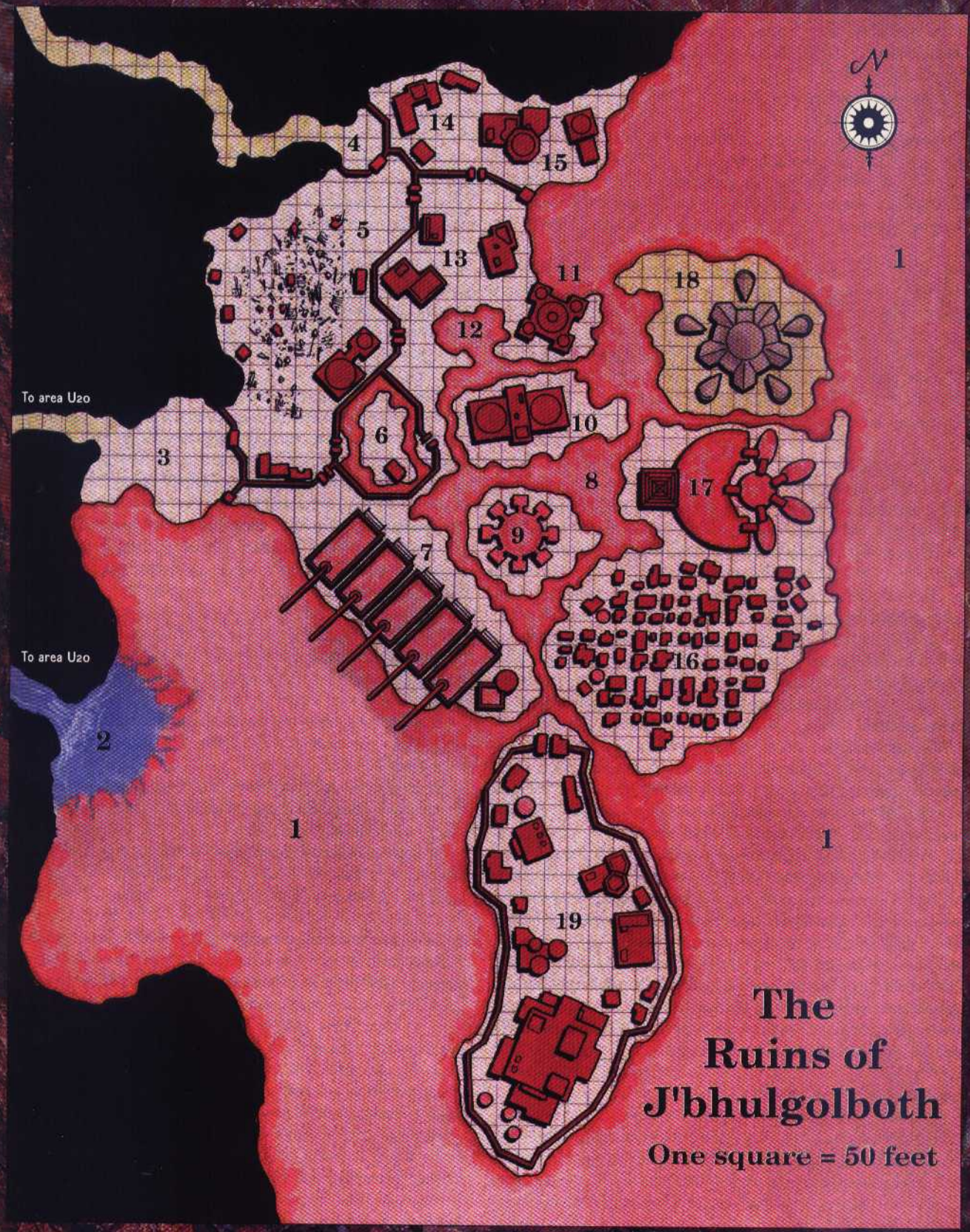
Possessions: Scale mail armor, pincer staff, net pouch containing 3 assorted 100-gp gems.

Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Monitor Mnk4 (1): CR 7; Medium-Size Plant (6 ft. tall); HD 6d8+12; hp 39; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft, swim 50 ft.; AC 20 (+3 Dex, +3 Wis, +4 natural); Atk +9 ranged (infestation, tendril) or 22 (with Dodge feat); or +7 melee (1d8+2, unarmed strike), +2 melee (1d4, bite); SA infestation, breath weapon, unarmed strike, stunning attack 4/day (DC 15 Fortitude save); SQ plant, regeneration 3, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease,* keen sight, slippery, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious, evasion, still mind (+2 resistance bonus to spells and effects from the Enchantment school), slow fall (20 ft.); AL NE; SV Fort +11 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +12 (includes Lightning Reflexes feat), Will +12; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 7.

Skills: Balance +7, Escape Artist +21, Hide +13, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +11 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +12, Search +9, Spot +13 (includes Alertness feat), Tumble +9. *Feats:* Alertness, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes.

Possessions: Potion of ghoul touch, folding boat, net pouch containing 2 black pearls (500 gp each).

Tactics: The fighters use their pincer staves to grapple PCs (see page 126 of the *Monster Manual*), while the monitor drinks its *potion of ghoul touch* before entering melee combat.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The Ruins of J'bhulgolboth
One square = 50 feet

J7. Food Pens.

Five large shallow pools stand on the shore of the lake here, filled with the same fungus-crusted water that seems to be everywhere else in this city. A large stone tube emerges from the far end of the pool and empties into the infested waters of the fungus lake.

These pools were used to keep food for the inhabitants of the city. Fish, crustaceans, mollusks, and water plants were once grown here; they are all gone now. The tubes were magical siphons that drew nutrients out of the lake, but the Scarlet Tide ruined them.

J8. Waterways. These waterways provided the city with an additional defense against land based attacks; the kuo-toa could easily navigate these deep pools and trenches but non-aquatic enemies could not.

Since the scarlet tide, these waterways and pools have become just as crusted over and tainted with fungus as the lake itself; it is a simple matter for Medium-size or smaller creatures to simply walk over these areas.

J9. Spawning Pool.

A large, raised stone pool dominates this low island. The central pool is surrounded by eight smaller pools. The water has been completely covered over with a thick fungus shell.

This was where young kuo-toa were raised. Now, the central pool is completely shelled over by the scarlet rust.

Creatures (EL 8 per wave of 12): PCs who insist on breaking through the shell of scarlet rust find the central pool seething with young kuo-toa scarlet children. These disgusting fungoid creatures attack in waves of twelve, swarming over anyone within reach.

PCs standing on the pool must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) each round or fall into the pool. A PC who succeeds at an Escape Artist check (DC 20) or Strength check (DC 25) can escape; PCs who are unable to escape eventually drown and succumb to infestation.

Scarlet Children, Kuo-toa Young (60): CR 1; Small Plant (3 ft. tall); HD 1d8+1; hp 6 each; Init +0; Spd 15 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 13 (+1 size, +2 natural); Atk +1 ranged (infestation, tendril); or +1 melee (1d3, bite); SA infestation, breath weapon; SQ plant, keen sight; slippery; electricity resistance 30; light blindness; amphibious; AL NE; SV Fort +3 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +2, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 5.

Skills: Escape Artist +18, Listen +9 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +3, Search +7, Spot +11 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude.

J10. Museum.

Twin domes of white stone that have not been fully covered by the scarlet fungus dominate this large building. The façade is ornate, containing detailed carved murals of kuo-toa life. Many of these murals have been defaced and destroyed.

This building was a museum dedicated to preserving the history of J'bhulgolboth.

A PC looking through the ruins of this building can make a Search check (DC 25) to find a clue. (Taking 20 on this roll requires 15 minutes of searching.) No more than eight clues can be found in the rubble here.

Creatures (EL varies): For every 15 minutes spent searching the museum, there is a 10% chance the PCs are spotted by a group of scarlet children that rush to attack. Use the "Scarlet Children in the City" table to determine the exact encounter.

J11. Monitor Dome.

This large building is capped by a single dome; the whole structure is covered with thick sheets of scarlet fungus.

This is where the main body of J'bhulgolboth's monitor population lived. The walls in the main room are adorned with scarlet rust-encrusted murals. A PC who studies the murals can make a Search check (DC 25) to find a clue. (Taking 20 on this roll requires 15 minutes of searching.) No more than six clues can be found.

Creatures (EL 10): The building currently serves as the lair of three scarlet children kuo-toa monitors. These kuo-toa use *potions of hiding* to lurk unseen in niches until they are afforded an opportunity to strike.

Scarlet Child, Kuo-toa Monitor Mnk4 (3): hp 39 each; see area J6 for complete statistics, but give them the following possessions: *potion of hiding, potion of cure light wounds,* net pouch containing 1d4 black pearls (500 gp each).

J12. Aboleth Pool.

An extensive field of softly undulating fungus covers a naturally formed inlet nestled among the city's more imposing structures.

This pool was once the lair of an aboleth ambassador to the city. When the Scarlet Tide came, the aboleth gathered its belongings and fled.

Creatures (EL 10): Two scarlet children chuuls currently lair in this pool. They attack any who venture out on the fungus sheet covering the pool.

Scarlet Children, Chuuls (2): hp 104, 99; see the "Random Underdark Encounters" table for complete statistics. The chuul have no treasure.

J13. Embassies. These three buildings housed ambassadors to J'bhulgolboth from other Underdark races (illithid, drow, and duergar). All three buildings are fairly extensive and have large cellars. However, the buildings are not usually occupied.

J14. Barracks. These three buildings were the main guard barracks for the city. The three buildings shared one extensive underground level that included training facilities and many flooded areas. Scarlet rust coats the interior.

Creatures (EL varies): Each of these buildings has scarlet children dwelling inside. Use the "Scarlet Children in the City" table to determine the exact encounter for each.

J15. Prison and Asylum. Both of these buildings are squat and fortified. Exposed windows are barred and few. The larger of the two buildings was the city's prison. A few of the prisoners

kept here were kuo-toa, but for the most part the prisoners belonged to other races. This building is currently vacatnt. The building closer to the lake-shore was the city's insane asylum and is inhabited by the Creature.

Creature (EL 9): An insane kuo-toa named Plugoo inhabits the upper floor of the asylum, believing that he is the Chosen One of Blibdoolpoolp and destroying anyone who fails to meet the Sea Mother's expectation of perfection. He has so far resisted the infectious scarlet rust and relentlessly stalks and kills any creature that enters his domain.

Plugoo has black scales limned with silver. He uses *potions of spider climb* to fight on ceilings so that he cannot be flanked by opponents on the floor.

Plugoo, Male Kuo-toa Rgr7: CR 9; Medium-Size Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic) (6 ft. tall); HD 2d8+2 (kuo-toa) plus 7d10+7 (Rgr); hp 53; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 50 ft.; AC 22 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, +4 scale mail); Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+2/crit 15-20, *+1 keen short sword* with Improved Critical feat), +6/+1 melee (1d4, bite); or +9/+4 melee (1d6+2/crit 15-20 [x2], two *+1 keen short swords* with Improved Critical feat), +4/-1 melee (1d4, bite); SA Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting (in light or no armor), favored enemies (1st—drow, 2nd—dwarves); SQ keen sight, slippery, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious; AL NE; SV Fort +8 (includes Great Fortitude), Ref +7, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +2*, Concentration +4, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Escape Artist +16*, Heal +8, Hide +4*, Intuit Direction +7, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +6 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +6*, Search +10, Spot +11 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (short sword), Quick Draw, Track.

* Includes the -4 armor check penalty for scale mail.

Ranger Spells (2): 1st—*magic fang, pass without trace.*

Possessions: Scale mail, two *+1 keen short swords,* two *potions of spider climb.*

J16. Residential District.

This large island is dominated by a haphazard collection of small, bulbous buildings. Many of the buildings are completely buried under small mountains of scarlet fungus.

Although several of these buildings are empty or completely covered with scarlet rust, some of them hold scarlet children, treasure, clues, or all three. All buildings contain large pools of water.

Creatures (EL varies): Each time the PCs examine or enter one of these buildings, use the "Scarlet Children in the City" table to determine what (if anything) they encounter.

J17. Recreational Pools.

A squat pyramid overlooks several large pools of fungus thick water here. Low buildings on stilts connect the pools.

These pools were where the bulk of the kuo-toa inhabitants spent their free time. The crescent-shaped pool was used to stage gladiatorial combats. The pyramid served as a staging area for these diversions.

J18. Crown of Blibdoolpoolp.

This island is dominated by a massive, five-sided structure with a dome of reddish stone at the center. A walkway encircles the dome at a height of 50 feet, and a stubby tower rises from the top of the dome. A huge statue of a naked woman with lobster claws and a lobster's head stands atop the pinnacle of this central tower. Five looming spires surround the edifice, resembling massive ribs that curve toward the central dome.

This is the great temple of Blibdoolpoolp and is detailed in the next section of the adventure.

J19. Noble District.

This large island is surrounded by a 15-foot-tall stone wall, beyond which tower several impressive buildings. The largest of these structures is a complicated collection of domes, spires, towers, and bulbous façades.

Various nobles dwelt in the mansions located on this island. The king's palace is the largest structure on the island. Each building is several floors high and includes extensive underground areas. Murals on the walls provide clues to PCs willing to explore them. (See the "Clues in J'bhulgolboth" section.)

Creatures (EL 9 per building): Although most of the nobles fled the city before succumbing to the Scarlet Tide, a few of their lessers were not so fortunate and continue to lurk here as scarlet children.

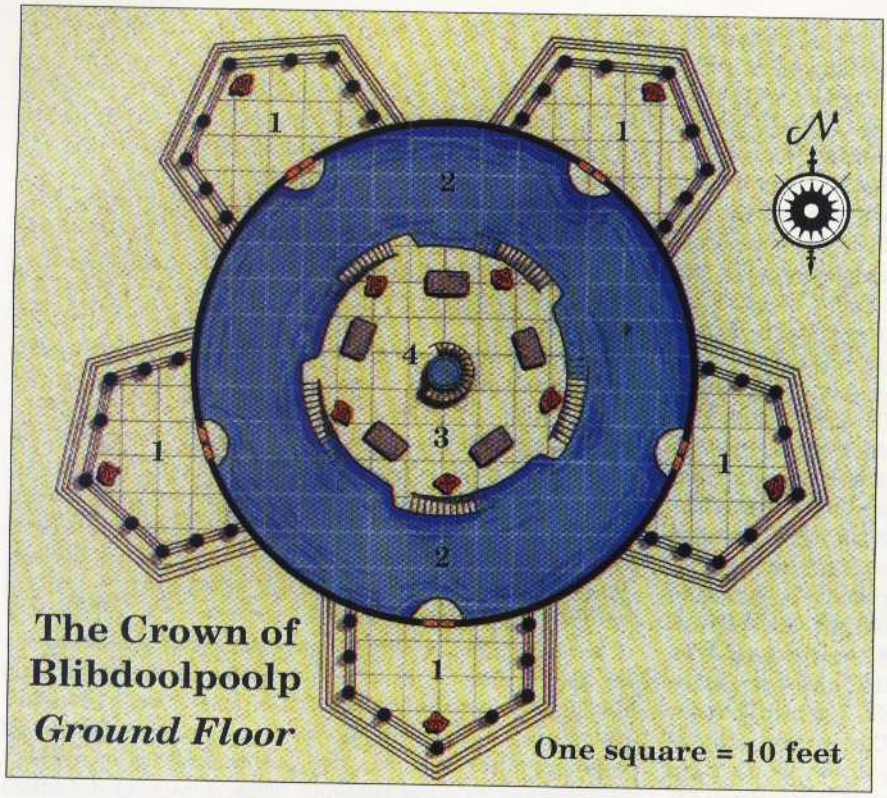
Nobles, Scarlet Children Kuo-toa (7-9 per building): hp 13 each; Use the statistics for the kuo-toa scarlet children in the "Scarlet Rust" sidebar at the end of the adventure.

Crown of Blibdoolpoolp (Areas C1-C36)

This was the spiritual center of J'bhulgolboth. The powerful wards and enchantments on the great temple protected it when the Scarlet Tide came, but unfortunately its priests were unable to protect the rest of the city. Using the magic of one of their greatest relics, the Whips of the Crown were able to temporarily halt the coming of Xhagevoxhab, but this same magic cost them their lives. Now, the ghosts of these priests haunt the temple and protect the one thing that can send the Scarlet Lord back to its prison: the Sifkhu Tablets.

Whereas the scarlet rust has laid its claim on the rest of the city, it cannot penetrate the temple due to the protective wards; none of the scarlet children can enter either. At first, the heroes might think they have found a safe haven in the ruined city, but before long they realize that those who still dwell within the temple are even more dangerous than the scarlet children. For in their failure to save J'bhulgolboth, the Whips of the Crown were driven mad. Doomed to guard its halls as ghosts until the Sifkhu Tablets are used to rebind Xhagevoxhab, the ghosts see all living creatures as hosts for the Scarlet Lord and attack such intruders without mercy.

The Crown consists of four above-ground floors and two underground levels. Most of the populace of the city made regular visits to the ground floor of the Crown, but only the priests were allowed on the upper floors. Only the high priests and a select few underlings were allowed in the underground regions. The entire temple is constructed of red-brown marble; the



inner walls, ceilings, and floors are set with blue-green tiles. Many of these tiles bear intricate carvings that depict scenes from the city's history or from kuo-toa mythology. Many of the ceiling tiles are enchanted with *continual flames* that burn with a soft green glow. This gives the internal chambers of the temple the illusion of being underwater; most areas in the temple are well lit in this manner. Exceptions are noted in the text. Ceilings are a uniform 8 feet tall in the upper floors and crypt of the Crown.

Special Features

All of the chambers within the temple are enchanted with a *desecrate* spell. All Charisma checks made to turn undead suffer a -3 profane penalty, and undead in the Crown gain a +1 profane bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. All undead encountered in the Crown were formed within the *desecrated* area and have +1 hp per Hit Die.

In addition, there are several electrical traps that ward the Crown (described under area **C10**); these traps cannot be triggered by kuo-toa. Both the *desecrate* aura and the electrical traps are powered by magical foci located under the five rib-like towers that surround the building; these foci are detailed under the description for area **C24**. As long as the foci function, the electrical traps reset themselves 10 minutes after discharge. Only creatures that are not kuo-toa can trigger the various magical traps in the Crown.

Inhabitants of the Crown

There are many guardians in the Crown, but none so numerous or persistent as the ghosts. The most numerous ghosts were the Whips (32 1st-level kuo-toa clerics). The second tier of priests were the Claws, each of whom had specific duties in the temple. The high-priest Gorrkulabuk occupied the highest position and tier.

Creatures (EL 9 per 4 ghosts): The ghostly Whips can be found anywhere in the upper floors of the temple; thus, their statistics are given here:

Ghost, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1: CR 5; Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal); HD 3d12; hp 19; Init +0; Spd fly 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 deflection) or 16 (+6 natural) ethereal; Atk +3 melee (1d4, corrupting touch); SA spells, *lightning bolt*, manifestation, corrupting touch, *telekinesis* (as Sor12), rebuke/command undead; SQ undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, keen sight, light blindness, electricity resistance 30; AL NE; SV Fort +6 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +3, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Escape Artist +18, Knowledge (religion) +6, Hide +8, Listen +17 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +3, Search +18, Spot +19 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll.

Spells (3/2+1): 0—*guidance, inflict minor wounds* (×2); 1st—*cause fear, inflict light wounds, protection from good**.

* Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite good 1/day; +4 attack bonus and +1 damage bonus), Evil (casts evil spells as Clr12).

Tactics: The Whips usually confront PCs in groups of four, using their *telekinesis* ability to violently thrust foes up to 300 lbs. (see page 264 of the *Player's Handbook* for details). They use their *inflict wounds* spells to heal damage to themselves and rely on their turn resistance and the *desecrated* temple to resist turning attempts.

C1. Entrances to the Crown. The central dome of this massive structure is surrounded by five porticos, each sheltering a 10-foot-tall copper statue of Blibdoolpoolp. The statue stands with its clawed arms raised toward a pair of large, beaten copper doors in the side of the central structure. The floor is inlaid with thousands of sea-green tiles that almost look like the rippling surface of a bottomless lake.

As the PCs step under the roof of a portico, have them make Listen checks (DC 25). Those who succeed feel a cold draft slither over them and hear a faint, slobbering voice utter a few short words in an alien language. This is a manifestation of the kuo-toa ghosts; anyone who speaks Kuo-toa or anyone with the ability to *comprehend languages* understands the message: "Step forth, intruder, and be judged by the Sea Mother."

C2. Great Temple of Blibdoolpoolp.

This room takes up the complete ground floor of the building. A semicircular platform sits just beyond the entrance doors, and a large circular stage dominates the center of the room. The area between the platforms and the central stage is flooded with water, the surface of which seems to flicker with a faint green glow. The domed roof curves upward above, every inch of it covered with elaborate carved murals

of kuo-toa history. The circular stage is 10 feet above the water and 70 feet across. Five flights of steps lead out of the pool to the stage, the surface of which slopes gently upward to the center. Five stone blocks and five copper statues of the lobster-headed woman are arranged around the perimeter of the stage, but the most impressive sight is the flickering, freestanding column of water rising from the center of the pulpit to the peak of the domed roof ahead. Copper spiral stairs wind around the water column and up through a hole in the ceiling.

The ceiling of this room is 140 feet high at its peak. The pool surrounding the central pulpit (area **C3**) is 10 feet deep; kuo-toa coming to worship would float on the surface of the pool and watch the sermons on the pulpit. The water is brackish but still drinkable. Anyone entering the pool triggers the **Trap**, while scattered about the floor of the pool is the **Treasure**. The temple itself is inhabited by the **Creatures**.

The murals on the ceiling are large enough to study from ground level. There is a wealth of information presented in these murals, but much of the information is depicted in metaphor or symbols. Successfully deciphering a section takes 10 minutes and a successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20). PCs who can read Kuo-toa or Decipher Script (DC 30) gain a +4 synergy bonus to this check. Roll 1d12 and consult the "Clues in J'bhulgolboth" section to determine what information is gleaned from the mural.

Trap (EL 6): When the pool is entered, the arms of the five statues on the pulpit swivel down, aim at the surface of the water, and emit a bolt of electricity that transmits throughout the water, damaging anything in contact with it.

Lightning Trap: CR 6; 10d6 points of electrical damage, Reflex saving throw (DC 16) for half damage; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

Creatures (EL 9): Four kuo-toa ghosts inhabit the temple.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

Tactics: The four ghosts remain hidden in the walls and floor and move through these surfaces to position themselves so they can attack with surprise. When the lightning trap is sprung or when the PCs reach the pulpit (whichever comes first), the ghosts emerge and attack with their *lightning bolt* ability. They continue to attack with *lightning bolts* every 1d4 rounds, using their *telekinesis* powers on off rounds.

Treasure: The floor of the pool is scattered with offerings; most of these are valueless, but there are a significant number of pearls scattered throughout the pool. For every minute spent searching the pool, a Search check (DC 20) uncovers 1d4 pearls. There is a total of 20 pearls in the pool, and each is worth 100 gp.

C3. Pulpit. This is where the kuo-toa whips performed sacrifices to the Sea Mother and gave sermons to the masses. The floor here is polished smooth and slopes upward from the edge to area **C4**. The PCs might think something of value is hidden in one of the statues or the carved altar stones, but there is nothing here but the **Trap**.

Each statue has Hardness 9 and 120 hit points.

Trap (EL 6): Anyone who climbs one of the short flights of stairs up from the pool onto the pulpit must pass by one of the exquisitely carved copper statues of Blibdoolpoolp. As they do, one of the statue's claws swings down and snaps at the passerby for 2d4 points of damage; if it hits, the claw inflicts an additional 4d6 points of electrical damage and attempts to grapple the victim. A grappled victim suffers claw and electrical damage each round.

Claw Trap: CR 6; +10 melee (2d4 plus 4d6 points of electrical damage) plus grapple, Fortitude saving throw (DC 16) halves damage from electricity; Escape Artist or Strength check (DC 25) to get free; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 28).

C4. River of the Dead.

Up close, you can see that the column of water is contained in a faintly flickering sheath of translucent green energy. The steps encircling the watery pillar are made of copper and supported by intricate copper superstructure that bears a disturbing similarity to frozen bolts of lightning.

The pillar is actually a *permanent wall of force* shaped in the form of a tube that rises from the ground floor up to the third floor. If the PCs destroy the *wall of force*, the water in the tube spills outward. All PCs standing on the pulpit (area **C3**) must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or be washed into the pool; if any of the statues are still active, they discharge the lightning trap described in area **C2** for 4 rounds.

If the PCs don't destroy the *wall of force*, the watery tube can be entered from area **C18**. Although the *wall of force* only extends a few feet into the pulpit, the shaft continues to descend into the ground for another 50 feet, emerging in area **C22** of the crypt.

Before the Scarlet Tide, this column of water was known as the "River of the Dead." When important kuo-toa died, elaborate funeral services were held. During the main ritual, the Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp prepared the body for the afterlife. At the climax of the ritual, the Hidden Claw would carry the body down the river from area **C18** through this chamber and pass the worshipers down into the crypts below.

C5. Guardian Statue.

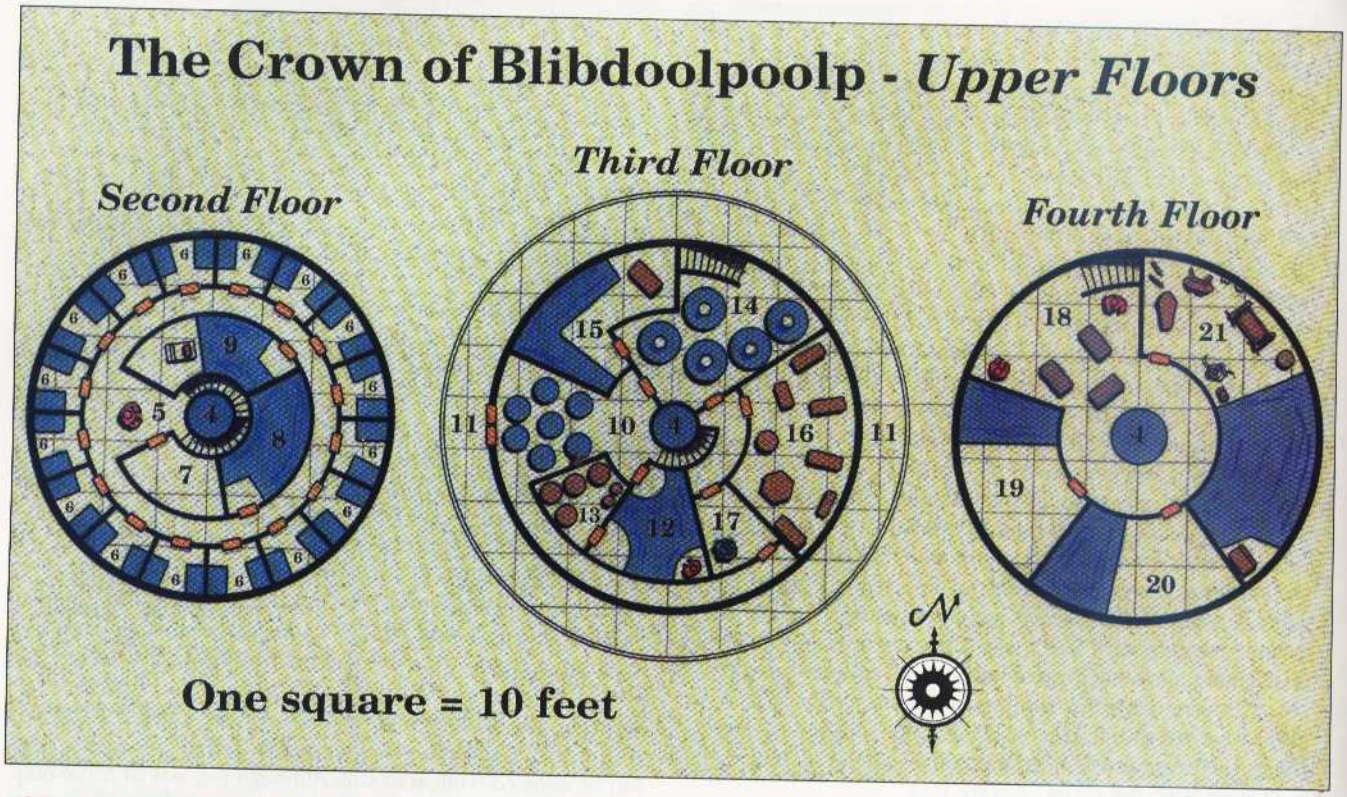
The stairway reaches a landing here before continuing up into the tower. Another large statue of the kuo-toan goddess stands here, this one made of seashells. The statue's head is an actual giant lobster's head.

Creature (EL 7): This statue of Blibdoolpoolp is, in fact, a seashell golem. The art of creating seashell golems is a closely guarded secret of the kuo-toa. Such constructs are often posted as guardians in holy places. Aside from their superior Armor Class, seashell golems are identical to flesh golems.

The seashell golem attacks any non-kuo-toa trying to move past it to reach areas **C6-C9**. It cannot leave this level.

Seashell Golem (1): CR 7; Large Construct (9 ft. tall); HD 9d10; hp 62; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 22 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +14 natural); Atk +10 melee (2d8+5 [×2], claws); Reach 10 ft.; SA berserk; SQ magic immunity, damage reduction 15/+1, construct; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Treasure: The black, lobsterlike eyes of the seashell golem are actually a pair of abnormally large black pearls (worth 1,000 gp each).



C6. Whip Chambers.

The walls of this cell are festooned with religious carvings and glyphs. Two narrow pools occupy the corners to the left and right, and a low censer squats in the center of the room.

Each of these rooms is similar in layout. The thirty-two Whips of the Sea Mother once dwelt in these chambers. Now, each of these rooms stands empty and deserted.

C7. Robing Room.

A dozen violet and black robes line the walls of this chamber. The robes are adorned with disturbing runes and symbols and are sized and tailored to fit kuo-toa.

The robes are voluminous and made of soft anenome membranes and fibers. PCs who don these robes can make a Disguise check (DC 30) to avoid triggering traps and guardians that normally allow only kuo-toa to pass safely (including the seashell golems in areas C5 and C18).

C8. Meditation Chamber.

The floor of this large room is dominated by a large shallow pool of water.

Creatures (EL 9): Four kuo-toa ghosts attack the PCs the first time they enter this chamber. Emerging from the walls, the ghosts use *telekinesis* to hurl PCs into the pool, electrocuting them the following round with their *lightning bolt* ability.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

C9. Classroom.

A large pool of water divides this chamber. A coral lectern stands atop a low dais at the back of the room.

This room was used by the Claws of Blibdoolpoolp to train Whips. Their is nothing of value here.

Creatures (EL 9): Four kuo-toa ghosts attack the PCs the first time they enter this chamber. Emerging from the walls, the ghosts use *telekinesis* to hurl PCs into the pool, electrocuting them the following round with their *lightning bolt* ability.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

C10. Lounge.

This open room contains seven raised circular pools adorned with shellfish bas-reliefs. Set into the western wall is a pair of ornate copper doors. To the south, a corridor covered with murals curves away into darkness.

The double doors leading to area C11 are trapped (see **Trap** below). The room itself is inhabited by the **Creatures**.

The southern corridor leading to area C17 is covered with elaborate murals that depict scenes from J'bhulgolboth's history. These murals contain as many as six clues (see the "Clues in J'bhulgolboth" section), but finding a clue amid the scenes requires a successful Search check (DC 25). Taking 20 on this roll requires 15 minutes of careful study.

Creatures (EL 9): Four kuo-toa ghosts dwell here. They use *telekinesis* to hurl PCs into the pools, electrocuting them the following round with their *lightning bolt* ability.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

Trap (EL 5): Walking through the double doors leading to area **C11** activates a crackling wall of lightning that fills the portal and damages anyone within 5 feet of the doors.

Wall of Lightning Trap: CR 5; 5-foot-range; 6d6 points of damage, Reflex save (DC 16) halves damage; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

C11. Temple Balcony.

A 10-foot-wide balcony with a copper railing encircles the central tower here. The view is hauntingly beautiful. You can see the entire city through the hazy glow of the spore-choked air to the west and south. Eastward lies the seemingly endless expanse of the scarlet lake.

The 4-foot-high railing is sturdy. Anyone who climbs over the railing can attempt to climb down the outside of the main temple to the ground—a total distance of 50 feet.

Opening the double doors to area **C10** triggers a wall of lightning, as described in the **Trap** section of area **C10** above.

C12. Refectory.

This room is dominated by a large pool of dirty water. A red stone statue of the Sea Mother stands in the southeast corner of the room.

This pool is where the acolytes took their meals. The statue of Blibdoolpoolp is harmless.

Creatures (EL 9): Four kuo-toa ghosts attack PCs who enter this chamber.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

C13. Pantry. This cramped chamber is filled with foodstuffs, mainly dried seaweed and salted fish. The food stored here is all well preserved with salt and can serve to replenish the party's food supplies. There is nothing else of interest here.

C14. Library.

This large room contains several ring-shaped pools. Lanterns of glowing green liquid hang from copper chains in the ceiling, lighting this room much more brilliantly than most other rooms you have seen so far. The walls are lined with religious texts, stone tablets, scrolls, and the like.

The texts in this library cover many subjects, most relating in some way to kuo-toa religion or history. PCs who wish to peruse the texts can make Intelligence checks (DC 15) every 10 minutes to find a clue. A total of eight clues can be discovered.

Creatures (EL 9): Ten minutes after the PCs enter, four kuo-toa ghosts arrive and attack.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

C15. Scriptorium.

Like the adjacent library, this room is well lit by several hanging green lamps. Tools for transcribing scrolls and books lies alongside chisels for inscribing tablets. An L-shaped pool with a stone overhang fills the northwest corner. A large, ornate desk looms to the northeast.

Before the Scarlet Tide, the Right Claw of Blibdoolpoolp spent much of his time here, overseeing the work of the scribes or penning magic scrolls at his desk.

Treasure: PCs who search the desk and make a successful Search check (DC 21) find a hidden panel in the side that opens to reveal a repository for divine scrolls. There are five scrolls (*cure moderate wounds, cure serious wounds, lesser restoration, remove curse,* and *remove disease*) within the compartment, each cast at 7th level. A *read magic* spell is needed to decipher the magical script.

C16. Workroom.

This room contains several tables made of crates, driftwood, polished coral, and other less identifiable substances. The tools lying atop the tables suggest that these once served as workstations for leatherworkers, jewelers, tailors, sculptors, and gemcutters.

Kuo-toa Whips with no talent for transcription or the illumination of texts were expected to learn one of the various trades represented here; their handiwork was usually sold in the marketplace to help line the Crown's treasure coffers.

Creatures (EL 9): PCs who spend more than 10 minutes in this room are attacked by four kuo-toa ghosts. The ghosts use their *telekinesis* ability to hurl tables at the PCs. Treat these as melee attacks (+1 attack bonus for 13 Intelligence) that deal 2d6 points of damage per hit.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

C17. Shrine To Sifkhu.

This room is dominated by a huge green marble statue of an imposing kuo-toa. The statue stands 7 feet tall and reaches up to the ceiling. The kuo-toa has an imperious, almost divine countenance. The room is otherwise empty.

Here the kuo-toa priests paid homage to their founding father, the great Sifkhu. Although the marble statue of Sifkhu is impressive and somewhat intimidating, it is not a physical threat.

Creatures (EL 9): PCs who deface the statue or spend more than 10 minutes here are attacked by four kuo-toa ghosts. These ghosts cannot be turned due to the bolstering presence of Lord Sifkhu's effigy.

Ghosts, Kuo-toa Whip Clr1 (4): hp 19 each; see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" for statistics.

C18. Funereal Chamber.

Two 9-foot-tall statues of the Sea Mother stand in the corners of the room near three slabs of grayish-green stone. The statues are made of seashells, although the lobster heads and claws appear to be real. A circular section of the room holds a softly glowing pool of water at its center.

This chamber served as a private shrine for the Claws of Blibdoolpoolp and the Highpriest as well as a staging area for funerals. During such rituals, the Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp would wrap bodies in plants and guide them down the River of the Dead (area **C4**) into the crypts below (areas **C22-C23**).

Creatures (EL 9): The statues of Blibdoolpoolp are seashell golems that attack any non-kuo-toa trying to cross the room. They cannot leave this level.

Seashell Golems (2): hp 52, 49; see area **C5** for complete statistics.

C19. Left Claw of Blibdoolpoolp.

All manner of weapons hang on racks in this room; some of them are familiar and others are completely alien in appearance. A pool of filmy water dominates the northern third of this chamber.

One of the racks holds a valuable collection of weapons, detailed under **Treasure** below. This rack hangs on the north wall over the murky pool and is firmly bolted to the wall. PCs wishing to inspect the weapons must somehow navigate the pool without disturbing the **Creature** within.

Creature (EL 9): This room belonged to the Left Claw of Blibdoolpoolp, the kuo-toa priest in charge of security for the temple. The ghost of the Left Claw returned to this chamber upon its death and since that time has been attempting to design new weapons to fight the scarlet children. So far, the ghost's plans have not left the design stage; it spends most of its time deep in the waters of the pool contemplating the best of these designs. It won't notice the party's intrusion as long as the PCs remain quiet and do not disturb the water.

Left Claw of Blibdoolpoolp, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr5: CR 9; Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal) (6 ft. tall); HD 7d12; hp 78; Init +3 (Dex); Spd fly 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 deflection) or 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural) while ethereal; Atk +7 melee (1d10+2 plus Strength drain and grapple, *+1 ghostly pincer staff);* SA spells, pincer staff, Strength drain (see below), *lightning bolt,* manifestation, corrupting touch, *telekinesis* (as Sor12), rebuke/command undead; SQ undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, keen sight, electricity resistance 30, light blindness; AL NE; SV Fort +8 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +7, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 16, Con –, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills: Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Concentration +6, Escape Artist +21, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +10 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +8, Search +9, Spellcraft +1, Spot +12 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (pincer staff), Great Fortitude.

SA—Strength Drain (Su): The Left Claw deals 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage to a living foe on a successful melee attack with his pincer staff. If the pincer staff grapples a foe, it deals additional damage and Strength loss each round.

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1): 0—*detect magic, guidance* (×2), *inflict minor wounds, resistance;* 1st—*bane, cause fear, inflict light wounds, protection from good*, shield of faith;* 2nd—*silence, shatter*, sound burst, spiritual weapon;* 3rd—*blindness/deafness, contagion*, glyph of warding.*

* Domain spells. *Domains:* Destruction (smite good 1/day; +4 attack bonus and +5 damage bonus), Evil (casts evil spells as Clr6).

Possessions: +1 ghostly pincer staff. The pincer staff fades away when the ghost is defeated and cannot be recovered.

Treasure: One rack of weapons contains a valuable collection. This rack hangs on the north wall over the pool and consists of the following weaponry: a masterwork spiked chain, a masterwork pincer staff, a *trident of fish command,* and a *+1 net of distance.*

C20. Right Claw of Blibdoolpoolp.

This room is cluttered with religious icons and relics. Strange writing covers every available wall space. A large pool dominates the western third of the chamber.

This room belonged to the Right Claw of Blibdoolpoolp, the priest in charge of teaching the Whips. When he died, the Right Claw's Charisma score was too low to allow for his transformation into a ghost; thus, this room is uninhabited.

Those who can decipher the writings on the wall—requiring a successful Decipher Script check (DC 25) or the ability to comprehend the kuo-toan language—can tell that the writings are the insane rantings of the Right Claw of Blibdoolpoolp. Studying the writing yields one clue every 10 minutes, with a maximum of four clues.

C21. Gorrkulabuk's Quarters.

The furnishings here are opulent and decadent, festooned with the unholy symbols of the Sea Mother. A single huge mosaic depicting the court of Blibdoolpoolp spans the entire east wall. Several horrible torture devices stand in the north half of the room, forming a museum of pain. A massive pool takes up the southern half of the chamber, and you can discern a large, shadowy object lurking in its depths. An ornate cabinet stands against the wall on the far side of the pool.

Since his transformation into a ghost, the kuo-toa Highpriest Gorrkulabuk has remained in the Reliquary under the temple (area **C33-C36**).

The cabinet across the pool has a **Trap** and contains the **Treasure.** The **Creature** sits at the bottom in the pool.

Creature (EL 7): The pool is shaped like an inverted ziggurat. Gorrkulabuk's most trusted minion—an ancient gibbering mouther—still lurks within. It rises to attack anyone above or near the pool, using its ground manipulation ability to soften the floor and hold fast any PCs near the pool's edge.

Ancient Gibbering Mouther (1): CR 5*; Large Aberration (16 ft. wide); HD 12d8+36; hp 87; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19 (-1 size, +10 natural); Atk +13 melee (1d2+4/crit 19-20 [×6], bites plus Improved Critical feat); Face 15 ft. × 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA gibbering, spittle, improved grab, blood drain, engulf, ground manipulation; SQ amorphous; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6 (includes Lightning Reflexes feat), Will +9; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Listen +16, Spot +20. *Feats:* Improved Critical (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse (bite).

* This gibbering mouther is an enormous specimen—three times the usual size! Award +300% XP to the PCs for slaying or otherwise defeating this monster.

Trap (EL 7): The cabinet beyond the pool is locked—requiring a successful Open Locks check (DC 18) or *knock* spell to

open—and filled with insanity mist that fills the room when the doors are opened. The insanity mist dissipates in 10 rounds.

Insanity Mist Trap: CR 7; initial 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom, secondary 2d6 points of temporary Wisdom, Fortitude save (DC 15); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 30).

Treasure: The large cabinet holds six robes made of scintillating fabric. These are *robes of the deep*, as detailed in the "New Magic Items" sidebar (next page). The *robes* were used by kuo-toa priests to protect themselves from the water pressures that exist in the lowest levels of the temple.

C22-C30. Flooded Chambers. These chambers are completely flooded with water; the PCs must use magic to survive and navigate in this area. The *robes of the deep* found in area **C21** would prove especially useful.

C22. Gateway to the Realm of the Dead. The following boxed text assumes that the PCs enter this chamber by swimming down the central water-filled shaft that begins in area **C18**. If the PCs enter by some other method, modify the description accordingly:

> You emerge from the water-filled shaft in the ceiling of a flooded, spherical room. Four circular passageways emerge from this room at its equator. The water is somewhat murky and cloudy, and bits of flesh and algae float on gentle currents throughout.

Check for a random encounter once each hour; an encounter happens on a roll of 1 on a d20. In addition to packs of kuo-toa ghosts (see the "Inhabitants of the Crown" section), the Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp has been busy *animating* the remains of dead kuo-toa to help defend the temple from attack by the scarlet children.

C23. Crypt. Each of these rooms has a cylindrical cross-section. The floors and walls are studded with dozens of niches containing the remains of the city's honored dead. Some of these crypts also contain the bodies of pet chuuls. The ceiling of each room is an intricate mass of religious symbols and carvings designed to protect the spirits of the dead; these carvings are nonmagical but disturbing to gaze upon.

Creatures (EL see below): Each time the PCs enter a crypt, roll on the following table to see what it contains. All undead attack intruders on sight.

d20 Roll	Encounter	EL
1-4	No Encounter	—
5-12	Kuo-toa Skeletons (12) and Kuo-toa Zombies (6)	6
13-16	Chuul Zombies (4)	4
17-19	Kuo-toa Skeletons (12) and Kuo-toa Zombies (12) and Chuul Zombies (2)	8
20	The Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp, preparing to *animate* more undead.	9

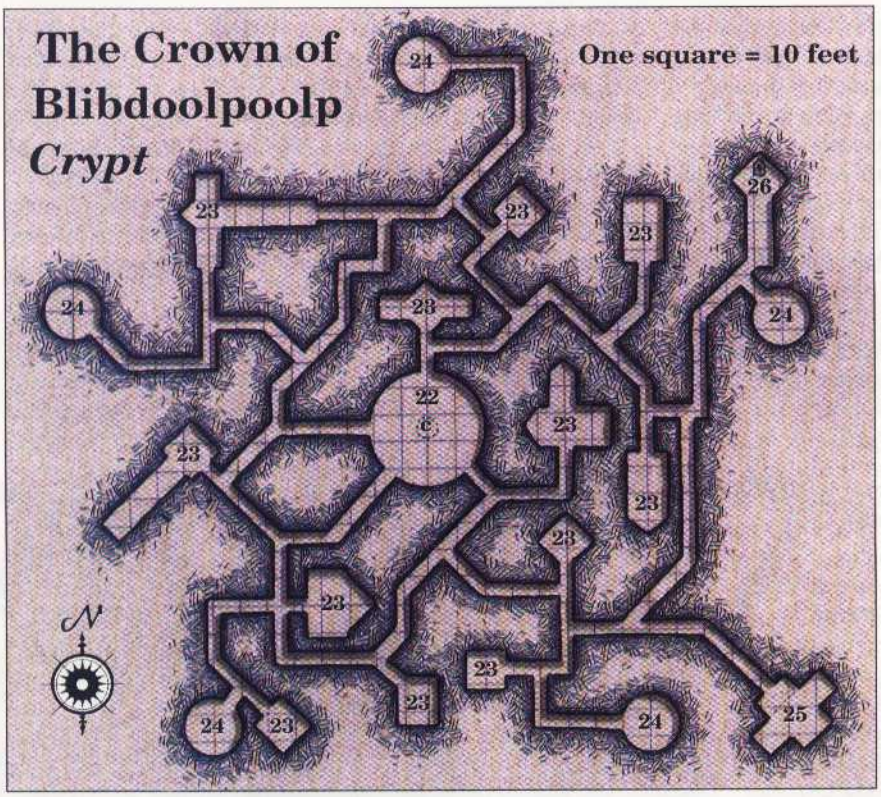
Kuo-toa Skeleton: CR 1/3; Medium-Size Undead (5 ft. tall); HD 1d12+3; hp 6; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +0 melee (1d4 [x2], claws); SQ undead, immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

Kuo-toa Zombie: CR 1/2; Medium-Size Undead (5 ft. tall); HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SQ undead, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feat: Toughness.

Chuul Zombie: CR 1; Large Undead (10 ft. tall); HD 4d12+3; hp 29; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +3 natural);



Atk +4 melee (1d8+4, slam); Reach 10 ft.; SQ undead, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feat: Toughness.

Treasure: There is a 10% chance that any particular crypt contains 3rd-level treasure (see Table 7-4 on page 170 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide).* This treasure is hidden in various niches and requires a successful Search check (DC 25) to find.

C24. Power Node.

The walls of this spherical room are adorned with hundreds of glowing green runes. The room is otherwise empty.

There are five of these chambers; each is located directly under one of the five rib-like towers that surround the surface structure. The runes on the walls are magical engines that power the electrical traps and *desecrate* aura in the Crown. A successful *break enchantment* or *dispel magic* spell destroys a power node; the runes are treated as 18th-level magic.

Development: Each time a power node is destroyed, there is a cumulative 20% chance that the electrical traps and *desecrate* aura collapse.

C25. Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp.

This room is superficially similar to the other crypts you've seen down here, save that there are no niches in the floor or walls. Instead, the walls are covered with detailed carvings depicting various rituals for creating undead kuo-toa. The wall opposite the entrance is smooth, translucent, and glows with a flickering blue-green radiance. You can discern faint square shapes beyond this wall.

Only the first 7 feet or so of this room is underwater. The shimmering blue-green wall opposite the entrance is actually a magical membrane keeping the water from flooding the rest of the room. The "T" shaped area beyond is not cylindrical in cross-section; the ceiling vaults overhead to a height of nearly 20 feet and flickers with green *continual flames.* PCs can freely pass through the membrane into the dry area.

This room contains a necromantic laboratory; bodies and parts lie in various states of dissection on tables in the northeast and southwest wings of the room. A large marble statue of the Sea Mother looms in the center of the room. Directly opposite the entrance is a small personal shrine and pool used by the Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp.

Creature (EL 9): The Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp takes care of the city's dead. In life, this kuo-toa was hideous even to others of its kind, possessing a rare birth defect that rendered his skin and musculature transparent. When he was killed and turned into a ghost, the Hidden Claw returned to the crypts and began to *animate* the dead of this area to create an army to battle the Scarlet Lord. The Hidden Claw is so obsessed with this mission that he failed to notice his own death after he and the other priests banished the Scarlet Lord a few days ago.

Hidden Claw of Blibdoolpoolp, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr5: CR 9; Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal) (7 ft. tall); HD 7d12; hp 61; Init +1 (Dex); Spd fly 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 deflection) or 17 (+1 Dex, +6 natural) while ethereal; Atk +6 melee (1d4, touch); SA spells, *lightning bolt,* manifestation, horrific appearance, corrupting touch, rebuke/command undead; SQ undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, keen sight, electricity resistance 30, light blindness; AL NE; SV Fort +8 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +5, Will +12 (includes Iron Will feat); Str 11, Dex 12, Con —, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +6, Escape Artist +19, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +9, Listen +10 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +6, Search +10, Spellcraft +6, Spot +12 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1): 0—*detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, mending, resistance;* 1st—*doom, obscuring mist*, protection from good, sanctuary, summon monster I;* 2nd—*darkness, fog cloud*, hold person, spiritual weapon;* 3rd—*animate dead* (×2), *contagion*.*

* Domain spells. *Domains:* Destruction (smite good 1/day; +4 to attack roll, +5 to damage roll), Water (rebuke/command water creatures 4/day).

Tactics: Any PC within 60 feet who views the ghost must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) or be overcome by its horrific appearance (as described on page 212 of the *Monster Manual).* The Hidden Claw fights primarily with his spells. Since he does not realize he is dead, he won't pass through solid objects and remains manifested at all times.

Treasure: A hidden panel is located on the floor of the small pool in the southeast section of the room; this panel can be found with a successful Search check (DC 30). Unlocking it requires a successful Open Lock check (DC 26), but the panel is not trapped. Located here are 46 black onyx gems (50 gp each) that serve as spell components for the Hidden Claw's *animate dead* spells.

C26. Entrance to the Vault.

The walls of this cylindrical crypt are blank and devoid of burial niches. A cubical chamber adjoins the far end of the cylindrical room, and you can see a gaping black hole in the floor therein.

The hole in the floor descends deep into the ground under the temple, eventually connecting to a large water-filled cavern. The shaft is 500 feet deep; PCs who descend into this flooded shaft begin to take damage from intense water pressure, as detailed in area **C27**.

C27. Sphere of Sifkhu.

The shaft emerges into a spherical chamber, its walls adorned with hundreds of softly glowing green glyphs and symbols. A massive rent in the southern wall opens into a large water-filled cavern.

The water pressures at work in areas **C27-C30** are incredible and deal 5d6 points of damage per minute. A successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15 +1 per each previous check) means no damage is taken in that minute. Wearing *robes of the deep* protect against this pressure damage as well as grant *water breathing*.

The sigils on the walls were created by Sifkhu hundreds of years ago. Their magic provides continuous *nondetection* on the contents of this level and the Reliquary below. The magic contained in the sigils functions at 18th level; a successful *dispel magic* or *break enchantment* erases all glyphs in the area of effect. Removing all of the glyphs in this area is a daunting task and is likely to bring the wrath of Blibdoolpoolp herself down on the transgressor (at your discretion).

The great cavern beyond the spherical chamber contains patches of underwater plants, bits of floating matter, and little else. A gaping orifice in the southwest wall leads to a much larger grotto (area **C28**).

C28. Crystal Grotto.

This water-filled cavern is lit by massive, pale green crystals that sprout from the walls, floor, and ceiling like sharp, bristling teeth. Many of these crystals form columns that extend the width of the room, transforming the cavern into a delicate maze of razor-sharp beauty.

A creature moving through this cavern at half its normal speed can avoid the sharp crystals, but a creature moving through here at full speed must make a successful Dexterity check (DC 15) each round to avoid being lacerated by the crystals for 1d10 points of damage. These crystals can easily tear apart *robes of the deep* if the wearer is not careful.

New Magic Items

Chains of True Binding

This unique minor artifact was created ages ago by a powerful kuo-toa priest named Sifkhu with the aid of a drow wizard whose identity has passed into obscurity. The chains are made of solid gold, each link the size of a human fist and carved with hundreds of mystic runes that flicker with green energy. When unused, the entire thing measures 10 feet long. The chains weigh a mere 10 pounds. Both ends are adorned with a large set of manacles and locks.

The chains were designed to place a victim in *temporal stasis*. However, their creation was flawed, and as time wore on their magic began to wane.

The chains are currently at the bottom of the Fungal Lake, binding Xhagevoxhab the Scarlet Lord.

Caster Level: 20th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *limited wish, temporal stasis; Weight:* 10 lbs.

Robe of the Deep

A *robe of the deep* is made of scales and fins harvested from fish. While worn, a *robe of the deep* grants *water breathing* (ideal for non-aquatic visitors wishing to pay tribute to the Sea Mother) and immunity to damage from water pressure. Every time the wearer of a *robe of the deep* takes damage from a slashing weapon, he must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 5 + the amount of damage dealt) or the *robe* is ruined. The *robe* is also destroyed by direct sunlight.

Caster Level: 7th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement, water breathing; Market Price:* 15,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

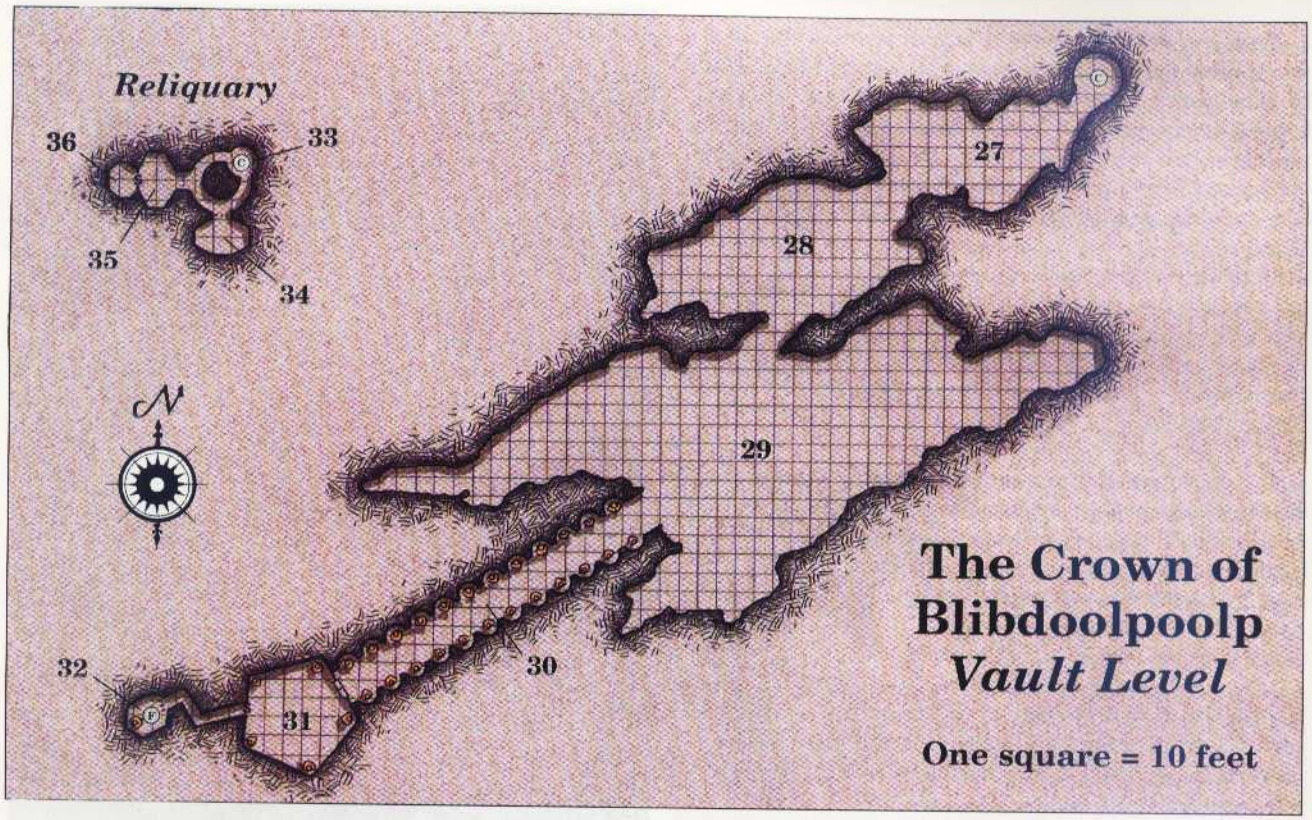
Sifkhu Tablets

The five tablets are carved from green marble and covered (both sides) with densely packed writing scripted in ancient Kuo-toa. In addition to chronicling the history of the city of J'bhulgolboth, these tablets contain potent spells to recharge the legendary Chains of True Binding. Deciphering the writing on the tablets requires a *read magic* spell, a Spellcraft check (DC 28), or a Use Magic Device check (DC 32).

The rebinding ritual can be performed by anyone able to read the tablets and either cast divine spells or Use Magic Device (DC 20). The ritual takes 10 rounds to perform, and the Chains of True Binding must be in sight during the first and final rounds of the ritual. Upon completion, the magic of the chains functions for a further 7 years.

The rebinding ritual can be reversed (in an unbinding ritual) to cancel the effects of the chains; this ritual takes only 1 round and does not require the chains to be in sight.

Caster Level: 20th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *limited wish; Weight:* 5 lbs. each.



Creature (EL 10): A greater water elemental has guarded this cavern since Sifkhu bound it to this location hundreds of years ago. In this environment, the elemental appears as a pair of drifting green orbs (its eyes) and requires a successful Spot check (DC 30) to notice before it attacks.

Greater Water Elemental (1): CR 9; Huge Elemental (24 ft. tall); HD 21d8+105; hp 210; Init +5 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 22 (-2 size, +5 Dex, +9 natural); Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d10+12/crit 19-20, slam with Improved Critical feat); Face 10 ft. × 5 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SA water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ elemental, damage reduction 10/+2, fire immunity; AL N; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +7; Str 26, Dex 20, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +23, Spot +23.

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (slam), Power Attack, Sunder.

Tactics: The elemental's damage reduction ability allows it to ignore all damage done by the crystals. Creatures caught in the elemental's swirling vortex are hurled repeatedly against the razor-sharp crystals and take an additional 1d10 points of damage each round.

C29. Canyon.

The crystal grotto gives way to an immense underwater canyon that plunges into icy darkness.

This is an incredibly deep rift in the crust of the earth that extends down for miles before ending in a vortex of turbulence that might well be a gateway to the Elemental Plane of Water. Objects or characters that sink into the depths of this cavern might very well be lost forever.

PCs crossing the cavern can make a Spot check (DC 25) to notice faint green lights emanating from area **C30**.

C30. Vault of the Ancients.

A roughly hewn gash splits the side of the canyon wall here. The rent measures about 20 feet across and slopes down into the blackness. A row of alcoves runs along each wall of the passage. Standing in each alcove is a 20-foot-tall statue of the Sea Mother. A green glow emanates from the eyes of these statues and taints the water with a sickly pallor.

The west end of this sloping hall is 500 feet lower than the east end. The incredible water pressure at this depth deals 12d6 points of damage per round and should quickly kill any unprotected creatures.

The vault ends at a pair of huge crystal doors. These doors open noiselessly at the slightest touch to reveal a vertical wall of water and a large, air-filled chamber beyond (area **C31**).

C31. Ritual Chamber.

This 50-foot-high, five-sided chamber is filled with air. Some sort of membrane holds the water at bay in the large doorway. Standing in each corner of the room is a 15-foot-tall statue of Blibdoolpoolp carved out of green crystal; each holds a brightly glowing green orb that lights the room.

The center of the floor is scarred as if exposed to a terrible fire. Four human-sized figures lie in heaps near the center of the room, their flesh blasted from their bodies and the remaining bones split open and blackened.

The membrane that holds back the waters of the vault (area **C30**) was created ages ago by Sifkhu and is nigh indestructible. Only a *wish* spell can dispel the magic and cause the water to flood this area.

This was once the grand ritual chamber of the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp, an architectural wonder that amplified magical effects cast inside it. It was here that the priests of the Crown performed the ritual of imprisoning Xhagevoxhab with the *Chains of True Binding* whenever it stirred, and it was here that the *Chains* themselves were first created. The recent attempt to imprison the Scarlet Lord went horribly wrong, though, and the resulting backlash of energy not only slew the three Claws of Blibdoolpoolp and Highpriest Gorrkulabuk (their blasted remains lie in the middle of the floor), but it destroyed the integrity of this chamber, forever ruining its metamagic properties. The only thing to survive the explosion were the Sifkhu Tablets. One of Gorrkulabuk's first actions as a ghost was to return the tablets to their resting place in area **C36**; since then, the ghost has brooded in area **C32**, waiting for the temple's wardings to fail and allow the Scarlet Lord to invade and destroy the tablets once and for all.

The secret door in the west wall is normally quite difficult to find, but it now hangs open, neglected and forgotten by Gorrkulabuk in his despair.

C32. Inner Sanctum.

The floor of this room flickers with green fire; despite this, the place is bitterly cold. The ceiling towers at least 40 feet above, and an equally massive statue of Blibdoolpoolp looms at the opposite end of the room.

This room is the doorstep to the Reliquary, the final resting place for Sifkhu and his personal items. Entrance is gained via a cleverly hidden trapdoor in the floor. This door can be discovered with a successful Search check (DC 30). The shaft below is perfectly smooth, but climbing down is possible by wedging one's body in the shaft and descending slowly, requiring a Climb check (DC 22). It drops 60 feet into area **C33**.

Creature (EL 11): Gorrkulabuk spends all of his time in this chamber, offering endless prayers to Blibdoolpoolp beseeching her for aid in fighting the Scarlet Lord. He suspects that the Sea Mother will eventually hear his prayers and destroy the Scarlet Lord once and for all. His attunement to this area allows him to sense the party's entry into area **C31**, and he is ready for them by the time they reach this room.

Gorrkulabuk, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr7 (Highpriest): CR 11; Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal) (6 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 9d12; hp 94; Init +2 (Dex); Spd fly 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 deflection) or 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural) while ethereal; Atk +8 melee (special, *rod of withering*); SA spells, corrupting gaze, malevolence, manifestation, *lightning bolt, telekinesis* (as Sor12), rebuke/command undead; SQ undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, keen sight, electricity resistance 30, light blindness; AL NE; SV Fort +9 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +7, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 14, Con –, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 19.

Skills: Concentration +7, Escape Artist +20, Heal +11, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +19 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +7, Search +19, Scry +9, Spellcraft +9, Spot +21 (includes Alertness feat). Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll.

Spells (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1): 0—*create water* (×3), *guidance* (×2), *resistance;* 1st—*bane, divine favor, doom, inflict light wounds, obscuring mist*, shield of faith;* 2nd—*fog cloud*, hold person, sound burst, spiritual weapon, summon monster II;* 3rd—*blindness/deafness, contagion, dispel magic, magic circle against good*;* 4th—*poison, summon monster IV, unholy blight*.*

* Domain spells. *Domains:* Evil (casts evil spells as Clr8), Water (rebuke/command water creatures 7/day).

Possessions: Ghostly rod of withering (fades away when Gorrkulabuk is defeated).

Tactics: Gorrkulabuk attacks PCs with his ghostly *rod of withering* and spells. If the PCs try to communicate with the ghost, they have to change his attitude from Hostile to Friendly before he breaks off his attack. If the players are not strong roleplayers, you can resolve this with a successful Charisma or Diplomacy check (see Table 5-4 on page 149 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). If the PCs convince Gorrkulabuk that they wish to help imprison the Scarlet Lord, the ghost stops fighting and views them as tools sent to him by the Sea Mother to put a stop to the Scarlet Lord's return.

Development: If the PCs befriend the ghost, Gorrkulabuk escorts them to area **C36**, bypassing the remaining guardians and traps. He can tell them the history of the city and says that the magic of the Sifkhu Tablets can send the Scarlet Lord back to its prison. If none of the PCs can use divine magic or decipher the magical writing on the tablets, Gorrkulabuk informs the PCs that he can perform the ritual if allowed to possess one of them (using his malevolence ability). His truce with the PCs ends if they try to take any of the treasures or relics in the Reliquary (areas **C34-C36**) apart from the Sifkhu Tablets.

C33. Ring of Sifkhu.

You have entered a small spherical chamber with 5-foot-wide, tubelike tunnels leading out of it. The walls here are smooth as glass and covered with strange glowing runes.

The runes protect this entire area with a *nondetection* spell but are otherwise harmless.

C34. False Chains of True Binding.

This octagonal room is blocked by a set of heavy iron bars. The room beyond is empty save for a low circular dais in the center of the room on which sits a large golden chain that flickers with tendrils of green energy.

A hidden switch in the wall can be found with a successful Search check (DC 30); flipping this trigger causes the iron bars to turn ethereal for 1 minute. The bars cannot reform if a solid object occupies the same space. The switch can be easily triggered from either side of the bars once its location is known.

Treasure: The large golden chain sitting on the dais is a masterful replica of the real Chains of True Binding. They are made of solid gold, enchanted with a variation of the *continual flame* spell (called *flickering flame*) and weigh 65 pounds; they are worth 7,500 gp.

C35. False Sifkhu Tablets.

This octagonal room is blocked by a set of heavy iron bars. The room beyond is empty save for a low circular dais in the center of the room on which sits a stack of five stone tablets that flicker with green flames.

The bars are identical to those blocking access to area **C34**. The secret door leading to area **C36** can be found with a successful Search check (DC 30).

Treasure: The stone tablets are clever replicas of the real Sifkhu Tablets. The writing carved on their faces contains a history of the foundation of J'bhulgolboth and little more; they weigh 50 pounds each and are worth 200 gp each to a historian or collector.

C36. True Crypt of Sifkhu.

This tiny room is lit by densely written, glowing symbols all over the walls, ceiling, and floor. A large stone sarcophagus sits in the center of the room. The stone lid is carved to resemble a mighty kuo-toa, and its sides are set with polished shells and fossilized fish skeletons.

The sarcophagus contains the earthly remains of Sifkhu and the mystical Sifkhu Tablets. The lid weighs 1,000 pounds and requires a successful Strength check (DC 25) to push aside. If the sarcophagus is opened without Gorrkulabuk's blessing, though, all creatures on this level must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 22) or be *feebleminded*.

The dusty bones of Sifkhu are harmless; the spirit of the ancient priest has long since gone. Of more import are the Sifkhu Tablets; they are stacked neatly at Sifkhu's feet. The powers and secrets contained in these magical tablets are detailed in the "New Magic Items" sidebar.

Treasure: There are other items of value in Sifkhu's sarcophagus. Gorrkulabuk won't allow the PCs to take them, and disobeying these wishes forces him to attack. These items consist of a *+4 periapt of wisdom, ring of freedom of movement, cloak of the manta ray, +2 longspear of wounding,* and *+3 pincer staff of icy bursts.*

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have recovered and deciphered the Sifkhu Tablets, the next step is to use the magic of the tablets to renew the Chains of True Binding. To do this, they must do one of two things: (1) Swim down into the depths of the Fungus Lake to Xhagevoxhab's prison or (2) Use the Sifkhu Tablets to temporarily suppress the magic of the Chains of True Binding and allow the Scarlet Lord to rise to the surface. Neither of these options is entirely safe, as discussed below.

Confronting the Scarlet Lord in Its Lair

If the PCs swim down into the lake, they need protection from drowning, water pressure, and scarlet rust infestation. The scarlet rust in the lake is particularly potent, and those who inhale or drink it must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) to avoid infestation. Xhagevoxhab lies partially dormant in a crater on the lake's bed, 1,600 feet below the surface. The *robes of the deep* help greatly in battling the pressure at this depth but afford no protection against infestation.

Finding the Scarlet Lord's lair is problematic; the Sifkhu Tablets give its exact location, but an Intuit Direction check (DC 15) is required to follow the directions precisely. Otherwise, it takes the 1d4+1 hours of exploration to find the Scarlet Lord's lair. Each hour of searching, there is a 50% chance that the PCs are attacked by a pair of Huge shark scarlet children (see area **J1** for statistics).

Suppressing the Chains of True Binding

Suppressing the magic of the Chains of True Binding to bring the Scarlet Lord to the surface requires the Sifkhu Tablets. The freed Xhagevoxhab rises violently to the surface, appearing in a colossal explosion of water and fungus 2d4 rounds after the Chains are suppressed. The Chains are easily visible, wrapped around the Scarlet Lord's amorphous body like a collar or belt.

It takes 10 rounds to renew the Abjuration magic of the Chains of True Binding using the Sifkhu Tablets. If the PCs are performing the ritual at the bottom of the lake, Xhagevoxhab is still partially bound but attempts to attack them nonetheless. Perhaps on the ninth round, the Scarlet Lord breaks free and can make 1 round of attacks before the PCs finish the ritual.

If the PCs allow the Scarlet Lord to rise to the lake's surface, it makes a beeline for them the instant they begin the ritual of rebinding, possibly reaching them on the ninth round and gaining a round of attacks before the ritual is finished. Adapt the situation as you see fit; if the party is particularly strong and weathered the challenges of this adventure with little problem, perhaps letting the Scarlet Lord push them around for 2 or 3 rounds is a good way to put a scare into them. Keep in mind, though, that Xhagevoxhab is an incredibly powerful opponent, and you shouldn't use the Scarlet Lord to arbitrarily kill the party off if they've done well up to this point. The idea is to make this final portion of the adventure exciting and memorable, not hopeless and deadly.

Completing the Ritual of Rebinding

Once the ritual of rebinding is complete, the Chains of True Binding flash with fire and lightning. A terrific roar fills the lake cavern. The Scarlet Lord thrashes about, causing huge waves to slam against the shores of J'bhulgolboth. Then, with a brilliant flash of green light, the Scarlet Lord sinks into the depths of the lake, bound in the Chains for another seven years.

Over the next hour, all of the scarlet rust begins to die. The stuff crumbles into powder that quickly blows away; in water, it dissolves into inert mush and is carried away by the current. The scarlet rust growing in the remaining scarlet children crumbles to dust as well, killing the children within 10 minutes. Within a day, the current clears the lake of the scarlet taint. The city of J'bhulgolboth remains ruined and empty, but Narwell has been saved from a terrible fate.

With the imprisonment of Xhagevoxhab, the ghosts in the Crown of Blibdoolpoolp are released from undeath. If he allied with the PCs and currently possesses a living host, Gorrkulabuk cries out in triumph before vacating his host body, leaving it senseless on the ground for 1d4 minutes. The PCs can explore the remaining ruins if they wish, or they can return to the surface to inform Captain Timane of their success.

Of course, the threat posed by the slumbering Scarlet Lord has only been averted; in seven years it will rise again. Now that J'bhulgolboth lies in ruins, there is nothing to stop its next awakening. Assuming the PCs keep the Sifkhu Tablets, they can learn the entire history of the Scarlet Lord and its imprisonment, and the dark truth that in seven years the beast will rise again. This could be the genesis for an epic campaign; perhaps in their study of the tablets, the PCs discover hints of a way to destroy the Scarlet Lord once and for all. Of course, they have to undertake many quests and do much research before they are able to achieve such a goal, but the final confrontation with Xhagevoxhab could be an event remembered for ages.

Scarlet Rust

The scarlet rust was first introduced into this world hundreds of years ago when a powerful druid opened a portal to some forgotten dimension and became infested with the stuff; over the years, the scarlet rust transformed the druid into a monstrous beast called Xhagevoxhab.

Scarlet rust grows quickly on living or undead flesh alike; constructs, elementals, fey, oozes, and incorporeal beings cannot be infested. In water it appears as a fine scarlet precipitate. The surface of infected water grows a thick shell of scarlet shingles, tendrils, and bulbs unless the water is in constant motion. A victim can become infested with scarlet rust by drinking water that is tainted with the rust; the victim must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) to avoid infestation. It is possible but unlikely to become infested by merely bathing in tainted water; the bather must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 5) each hour of immersion.

On land, the scarlet rust grows in low mounds that rapidly become bloated with spores; disturbing these patches releases a cloud of spores 10 feet in diameter. This cloud persists for 1d10 minutes before settling; that particular patch of scarlet rust cannot generate another spore cloud for an hour. Anyone who breathes in these spores must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10) to avoid infestation. This same saving throw must be made for every 10 minutes spent in a spore cloud. It is possible to move through a patch of scarlet rust and not trigger a spore cloud with a successful Balance check (DC 15); a new check must be made each round such actions continue. Immunity to disease provides complete protection from the scarlet rust.

A being infested with scarlet rust takes 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage each hour the infestation persists. The infection can be cured as a disease. Death occurs once the victim's Constitution drops to zero, at which time the fungus undergoes an explosive burst of growth that transforms the body into a scarlet child in 1d6 minutes.

Scarlet rust becomes dormant when exposed to sunlight. It is immune to fire, cold, electricity, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). A *remove disease* spell destroys up to a 10-foot-diameter patch.

Unlike green slime or yellow mold, scarlet rust has no CR. It is considered an extension of Xhagevoxhab, and its CR is incorporated into that of the Scarlet Lord (see below).

Scarlet Child

Scarlet children are creatures that have been transformed by scarlet rust. This infestation destroys the victim's personality and memories but leaves their abilities and skills intact so they can better serve the Scarlet Lord.

Strands of writhing fungus cover the body of a scarlet child. The eyes, nose, and mouth of a scarlet child are often replaced with nests of squirming tendrils, and a thick red ooze drains from the ears and any wounds on the body. A humming susurrus accompanies the scarlet child wherever it goes; this noise is caused by the scarlet rust as its fibers slither over and through the body of the infested being.

Scarlet children retain the ability to speak the languages they knew before their infestation. In addition, they can communicate telepathically with other scarlet child within 30 feet.

"Scarlet child" is a template that can be added to any aberration, animal, beast, dragon, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, outsider, plant, shapechanger, corporeal undead, or vermin, referred to hereafter as the "base creature." The scarlet rust cannot infest creatures that are incorporeal or immune to disease. When creating a scarlet child, use all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except for the following.

Hit Dice: The creature gains 8-sided Hit Dice.

AC: The creature suffers a -2 penalty to its natural armor bonus, if any (minimum bonus of +0).

Attacks: A scarlet child retains all of the base creature's attacks. It also gains a ranged touch attack: As a partial action, it can shoot forth a whiplike mass of fibrous red tendrils that lash out from the eye sockets, nostrils, or mouth to a maximum range of 15 feet. This "tendril attack" has an attack bonus equal to the scarlet child's Hit Dice plus Dexterity modifier.

Damage: Damage caused by the base creature's attacks remains unchanged. The scarlet child's tendril attack deals no damage but could infest the victim with scarlet rust (see Special Attacks–Infestation below).

Special Attacks: The scarlet child has all the special attacks of the base creature plus those given below:

Infestation (Ex): A victim hit by the scarlet child's tendril attack must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC equals 10 + the scarlet child's Hit Dice) or become infested with scarlet rust. See above for the rust's effects.

Breath Weapon (Ex): Once a day, a scarlet child can spit a concentrated glob of scarlet rust from its mouth at any target within 30 feet. The victim must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC equals 10 + 1/2 the scarlet child's Hit Dice) to avoid the glob. Otherwise the glob deals 1 point of temporary Constitution damage per round for 3d6 rounds as it quickly spreads through the victim's body. *Remove disease* destroys this infestation. Someone who dies from Constitution loss in this manner transforms into a scarlet child in 1d6 minutes.

Special Qualities: A scarlet child retains all of the special qualities of the base creature plus those listed below:

Plant: Scarlet children are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. They are not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). They have low-light vision.

Regeneration (Ex): Damage dealt to a scarlet child is treated as subdual damage, which the child heals at a rate of 3 points per round. The scarlet child suffers normal damage from electricity, acid, and sunlight (see below).

Susceptible to Sunlight (Ex): Scarlet children are susceptible to natural sunlight and *daylight* spells. Exposure to sunlight forces a scarlet child to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or collapse into dormancy until the exposure ends. Continued exposure forces a new Fortitude saving throw every minute.

Susceptible to* Remove Disease *(Ex): A scarlet child targeted by a *remove disease* spell must resist the spell with a successful Fortitude saving throw or be instantly slain. Even if the saving throw is successful, the child takes 3d6 points of damage plus 1 point per caster level.

Abilities: +2 to Constitution (undead base creatures do not gain this bonus), -2 to Charisma.

Skills: As base creature. Scarlet children gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.

Climate/Terrain: Underground
Organization: Solitary, band (1d4+1), or cult (5d20)
Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +1
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement Range: Same as base creature

Scarlet Children Characters: Creatures with the ability to cast divine spells lose that ability. The creature retains all other class abilities.

Sample Scarlet Child

Here is a sample scarlet child using a non-classed kuo-toa as the base creature.

Kuo-Toa Scarlet Child
Medium-Size Plant
Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 20 ft., swim 50 ft.
AC: 16 (+4 natural, +2 large shield)
Attacks: Tendril +2 ranged; spear +3 melee, bite -2 melee; spear +2 ranged
Damage: Tendril infestation (see below); spear 1d8+1; bite 1d4
Special Attacks: Infestation, breath weapon
Special Qualities: Plant, regeneration 3, keen sight, slippery, adhesive, immunities, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious, susceptible to sunlight and *remove disease*
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 6
Skills: Escape Artist +18, Knowledge or Craft (any) +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Search +10, Spot +11
Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude

Climate/Terrain: Any underground
Organization: Solitary, band (1d4+1), or cult (5d20)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement Range: By character class

The Scarlet Lord

Although the PCs are not expected to destroy Xhagevoxhab, the Scarlet Lord's statistics are presented below.

Xhagevoxhab
Colossal Plant (Aquatic)
Hit Dice: 24d8+216 (408 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft., swim 60 ft.
AC: 28 (-8 size, +26 natural)
Attacks: Gore +23 melee, 6 tentacles +18 melee
Damage: Gore 4d8+13, tentacles 4d6+6
Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: Constriction, infestation, breath weapon, command scarlet child
Special Defenses: Plant, damage reduction 20/+4, SR 28, regeneration 10, susceptible to sunlight
Saves: Fort +23, Ref +8, Will +15
Abilities: Str 36, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 20, Wis 24, Cha 26

Climate/Terrain: Any underground aquatic
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Level: 18
Treasure: See below
Alignment: Always neutral evil

Xhagevoxhab, the Scarlet Lord, was a powerful human druid who was exposed to a potent otherworldly fungus and transformed into a monstrous fungoid beast. The Scarlet Lord is vaguely shaped like a massive, tentacled worm. A sharp horn juts from the creature's chin, and rows of red eyes run down its back. The entire thing is covered with bulbous fungoid growths and a writhing forest of red tendrils.

Xhagevoxhab is currently imprisoned below a subterranean lake near the kuo-toan city of J'bhulgolboth. It can periodically extend its influence beyond its prison to taint the surrounding area and will likely escape someday. Were this event to occur, the Scarlet Lord would waste no time building its underground empire.

The Scarlet Lord is 120 feet long and weighs 300,000 lbs. It speaks its own gibbering tongue but can telepathically communicate with any scarlet child on the same plane of existence.

Combat

Xhagevoxhab attacks with its great horn and six tentacles; as the tentacles constrict victims, the Scarlet Lord retreats to cast spells at any remaining targets.

Improved Grab (Ex): Xhagevoxhab must hit with a tentacle to use this ability.

Constriction (Ex): If Xhagevoxhab succeeds in grabbing a victim with a tentacle, that tentacle can constrict for 4d6+6 points of damage per round.

Infestation (Ex): Anyone struck by Xhagevoxhab must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 31) or become infested with the scarlet rust. Anyone who comes within 50 feet of the Scarlet Lord must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) each round or become infested by the cloud of scarlet rust spores that surrounds the beast.

Breath Weapon (Ex): Once every 1d6 rounds, the Scarlet Lord can expel a glob of scarlet rust at any target within 240 feet. The glob strikes a 15-foot-radius area; any beings in this area must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 22) to avoid the glob completely. Those who fail take 3d6 points of temporary Constitution damage and must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 31) one minute later to avoid taking 3d6 additional points of temporary Constitution damage. Anyone reduced to zero Constitution in this manner dies and rises as a scarlet child 1d6 minutes later.

Command Scarlet Child (Su): Xhagevoxhab can telepathically communicate with any scarlet child on the same plane; commands issued to scarlet children in this manner are always obeyed without question and supercede commands issued through other plant-controlling magic.

Plant: Xhagevoxhab is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits. It is also immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). It has low-light vision.

Regeneration (Ex): Damage dealt to Xhagevoxhab is treated as subdual damage, which the beast heals at a rate of 10 points per round. It suffers normal damage from electricity, acid, and sunlight (see below).

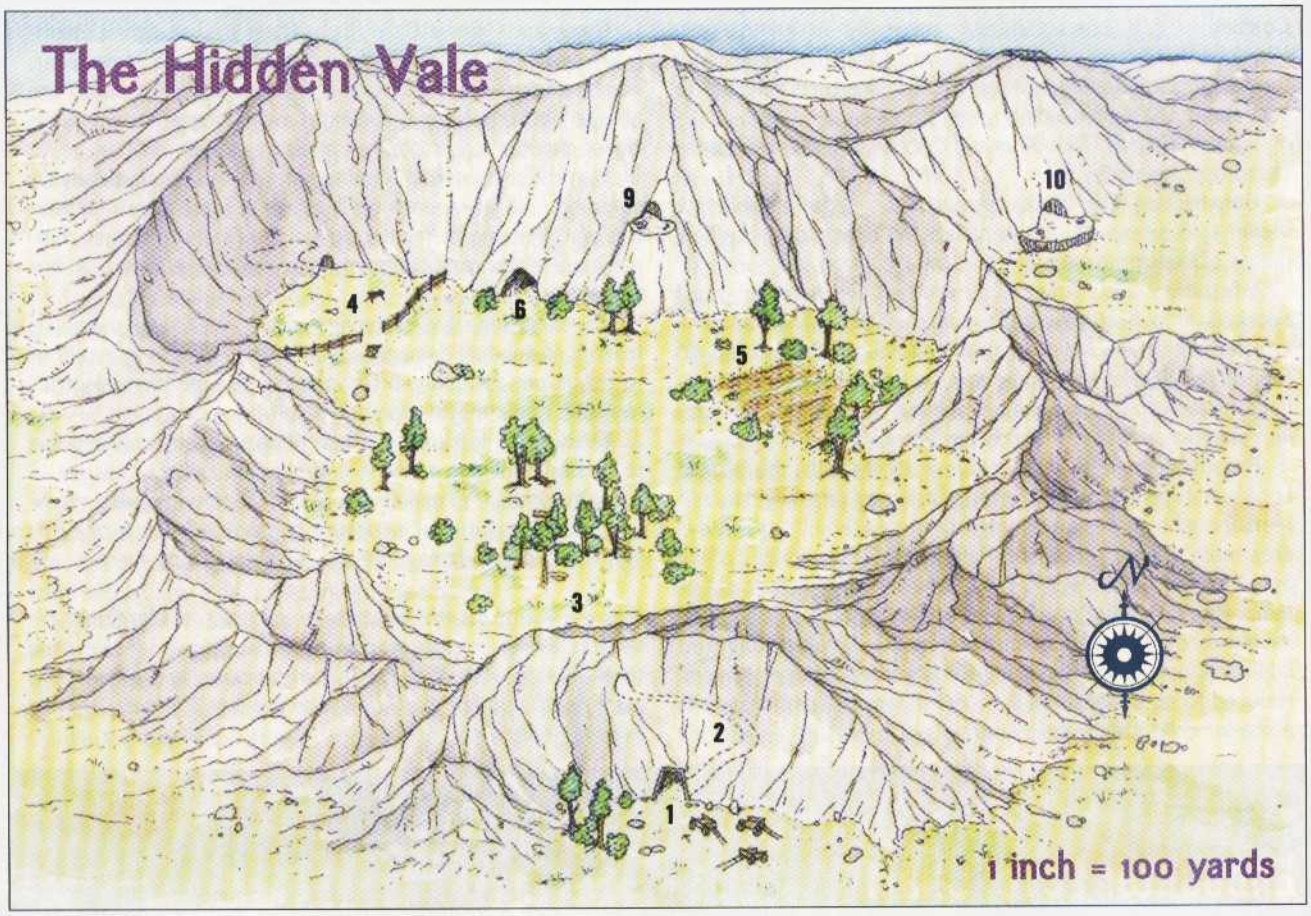
Susceptible to Sunlight (Ex): Xhagevoxhab is susceptible to natural sunlight, *daylight,* and similiar spells. Exposure to sunlight forces it to make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 30) each round of exposure or take 6d6 points of damage. It takes half damage on a successful saving throw. Ω

This is James' fourth appearance in DUNGEON Magazine. *He writes: "I dedicate this module to all the people who've tried (and failed) to convince me that mushrooms and other fungi taste good on pizza. You know who you are! The Scarlet Lord is coming for you!"*

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (ELs) for all of the event-based and location-based encounters in "Lord of the Scarlet Tide." Random encounters are not included in this chart; EL values for these are listed on pages ## and ##.

Area	Encounter Description	EL
Ev1	Tor Scarchin, Scarlet Child War3	6
	Human Scarlet Children War1 (5)	
Ev3	Half-orc Scarlet Children Rog4 (4)	9
U4	Yidrith, Mind Flayer Wiz1	9
U5	Shriekers (5)	8
	Violet Fungi (4)	
U7	Human Scarlet Children Rog1 (3)	5
U8	Skellyglur, Ancient Behir	12
U10	Yellow Mold (1)	6
	Brown Mold (1)	2
	Green Slime (1)	4
U12	Yidrith, Mind Flayer Wiz1	9
U13	Yidrith, Mind Flayer Wiz1	9
U14	Human Scarlet Child Rog5 (1)	9
	Human Scarlet Children Rgr2 (3)	
	Human Scarlet Children Rgr1 (4)	
U16	Bladestorm, Half-elf Clr6/Rgr6	12
U18	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children Ftr2 (4)	9
	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children Mnk (1)	
U19	Svirfneblin Rog1 (5)	5
J1	Huge Shark Scarlet Children (2)	7
J6	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children Ftr2 (4)	9
	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children Mnk (1)	
J9	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children (12/wave)	8/wave
J11	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children Mnk4 (3)	10
J12	Scarlet Children Chuuls (2)	10
J15	Plugoo, Kuo-toa Rgr7	9
J19	Kuo-toa Scarlet Children (7-9/area)	9/area
C2	Lightning Trap	6
	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C3	Claw Trap	6
C5	Seashell Golem (1)	7
C8	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C9	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C10	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
	Wall of Lightning Trap	5
C12	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C14	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C16	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C17	Kuo-toa Ghosts Clr1 (4)	9
C18	Seashell Golems (2)	9
C19	Left Claw, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr5	9
C21	Ancient Gibbering Mouther (1)	7
	Insanity Mist Trap	7
C23	Kuo-toa Skeletons (12)	6
	Kuo-toa Zombies (6)	
	Chuul Zombies (4)	4
	Kuo-toa Skeletons (12)	8
	Kuo-toa Zombies (12)	
	Chuul Zombies (2)	
	Hidden Claw, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr5	9
C25	Hidden Claw, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr5	9
C28	Greater Water Elemental (1)	10
C32	Gorrkulabuk, Kuo-toa Ghost Clr7	11



Flesh To Stone

Gnome, Gnome on the Range

by Anthony Talanay

cartography by Craig Zipse

"Flesh To Stone" is a D&D Side Trek adventure designed for four 7th-level PCs but can be modified for stronger or weaker groups as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. The adventuring party would benefit from the presence of a spellcaster capable of dispelling magic, a character with the Use Magic Device skill, or an arcane spellcaster with several ranks in Spellcraft. It takes place in any mountain or foothill setting and can easily be dropped into an existing campaign.

Adventure Background

About a month ago, a group of gnome miners began excavating a recently discovered vein of silver. All was going well until the miners broke through the hillside and discovered a small, enclosed vale. A group of cockatrices attacked the miners, turning all but one of them to stone. One cockatrice chased the last fleeing miner through the mine and caught him right outside the entrance. Now a frightened-looking statue in mid-stride stands just outside the mine's entrance.

Since then, the stone giants who dwell in the vale have gathered their "chickens" and haphazardly fixed the fence around the cockatrices' compound. The stone giants, Rumble and Perika, wear matching *+2 wedding rings of resistance* (similar to *cloaks of resistance*) that protect them from the cockatrices' petrifying touch. They believe to this day that the miners were thieves attempting to steal their poultry. After the gnomes were dealt with, Rumble placed a boulder over the opening to their yard to discourage other interlopers.

For the DM

As the PCs pass near the mine entrance (area 1), try to lure them through the entrance toward the giants' vale. If the PCs

don't take the bait, they might spot the ledges leading to the giants' lair (areas 9 and 10). The giants' "backyard" is roughly 200 yards wide by 500 yards long. The peaks around the vale are 300 to 600 feet tall. There are also 100- to 200-foot drops spread periodically throughout the entire range.

One day while Rumble and Perika were in their garden, they saw their pet cave bear attacked and petrified by a pair of cockatrices that had settled in area 4. The giants, not knowing what to do, talked to a local wizard about the problem. The wizard told them what he knew of the creatures and sold them a *wand of stone to flesh* to restore the bear and prevent any future mishaps. The stone giants saw good investment potential in the cockatrices and paid to have their wedding rings enchanted to give them additional resistance to the petrifying attack of the beasts. (The rings are similar to *+2 cloaks of resistance*.) Now the giants sell the cockatrices' eggs and feathers to merchants who pass through the area. To keep the cockatrices from flying the coop, the giants keep their wings clipped. Despite this precaution, the creatures always seem to find a way to break out of their pen; neither Rumble nor Perika are capable carpenters.

Encounters in the Hidden Vale

1. Mine's Entrance.

As you approach the mine, you see three small carts to the right of the entrance and a gnome statue posed in mid-stride just outside the cave's mouth.

Two of the carts are loaded with unrefined silver ore worth 50 gp per cart.

Creature (EL –): The petrified gnome by the entrance is Mosh, the leader of the miners. If Mosh is restored to flesh, use the following statistics:

Mosh Nimblewyck, Male Gnome Exp1 (Miner): CR 1/2; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (+1 size); Atk +0 melee (1d2-1 subdual, unarmed); SQ gnome (see *Player's Handbook*, page 17); AL NG; SV Fort +2 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +0, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +5, Climb +3, Jump +2, Knowledge (nature) +3, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +4, Search +5, Spot +1. *Feats:* Great Fortitude.

Possessions: Hammer, light pick, pouch with 15 gp.

Development: Mosh knows about the "evil chickens" (as do the rest of the gnomes), and all of the gnomes refuse to help the PCs fight the cockatrices unless *charmed* or persuaded by magical means. If restored to flesh, Mosh thanks the PCs and offers them a cart or two of ore if they retrieve his comrades. He knows nothing about the giants.

2. Mine Entrance. Four unlit oil lamps are mounted to the walls just within the entrance. The mine is 5-7 feet wide and about 8 feet high throughout. The tunnel goes for about 150 yards before coming to a blocked entrance.

A large boulder blocks the way, clearly pushed into place to block off the tunnel.

The tunnel is wide enough to allow up to three Medium-size PCs (or six Small PCs) to attempt to move the boulder at once. PCs who peek through cracks between the boulder and tunnel wall spot another gnome statue (see area 3 below).

3. Backyard.

The boulder gives way, revealing two gnome statues. Just beyond the statues lies a cluster of bushes, trees, and rocks. Staring at you intently with bright red eyes are four 3-foot-tall, strange-looking chickens with long feathered tails. Their wings haven been clipped.

Creatures (EL 7): The statues are Shedar Dimpledore and Brakan Wundersnuff, two gnome miners with statistics similar to Mosh's (see area 1). The cockatrices have escaped their pen and are hunting for sunbathing lizards when the PCs appear. As soon as the PCs step from the cave, the cockatrices attack.

Cockatrices (4): hp 27 each; *Monster Manual* 38.

Within 1d4 rounds of fighting, PCs begin to feel the ground tremble from the steps of an approaching, 4,000-pound stone giant. Read or paraphrase the following text at this time:

The "chickens" freeze in their tracks, tilt their heads for just a moment, and start to flee the area. Suddenly you notice the ground shivering to the tempo of thunderous footsteps that herald the approach of something enormous.

Creatures (EL 8): PCs can attack the fleeing cockatrices, but in doing so they are seen by Rumble. Once the cockatrices scatter, the PCs have 1 round to find cover before the stone giant appears; they can take cover behind the rocks, trees, and bushes to avail themselves of a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks plus one-quarter concealment. The giant tries to scare off any trespassers he spots.

Rumble, Male Stone Giant (1): hp 119; *Monster Manual* 98.

Possessions: Huge stone greatclub, 4 rocks, deerskin sack containing 100 gp and 200 sp, *+2 ring of resistance*.

Tactics: If Rumble sees one or more PCs, he throws rocks at them until they leave.

If the PCs are hidden and have killed any of Rumble's cockatrices, the giant approaches roaring, "Hey! What happened to my chickens?" Play up this scene, leaning to the more humorous aspect of the situation. Rumble proceeds to investigate the area more thoroughly, noticing (at the very least) signs of the battle, any new statues, dropped items, and so forth. He also sees the unblocked mine tunnel and pushes the boulder back into place. If he discovers the PCs in the vale, he attacks, calling them thieves and murderers.

The PCs can attempt to reason with Rumble using Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate skills. If the PCs can talk their way out of danger by explaining that the gnomes were not thieves but miners and that they only want the statues, Rumble grudgingly lets them have the statues of Shedar and Brakan. Perika, his wife, has taken a liking to the other three statues and has placed them in her garden (area 5) as statuary. Perika refuses to part with them unless she is paid 500 gp per statue. Rumble also tells the PCs that he will restore the gnomes with his *wand of stone to flesh* for 1,000 gp per statue. If the PCs can't afford that amount, Rumble gladly takes a young cave bear in exchange for restoring the gnomes. (He even knows where the PCs might find one.) Adjust the fee as you see fit, using it as a springboard for further adventures.

Creatures (EL 8): If the PCs fight with Rumble for more than 5 rounds, Perika finds her way to the balcony (are 9) and hurls rocks at any PCs within range. If she runs out of rocks, she joins the battle 4 rounds later.

Perika, Female Stone Giant: hp 125; *Monster Manual* 98.

Possessions: Huge greatclub, deerskin sack containing 500 gp and 200 sp, *+2 ring of resistance.*

4. Cockatrice Pen. In addition to the **Creatures** below, any cockatrices that fled from area 3 are here. A section of the fence has fallen, leading to their recent escape from the yard.

The middle of the compound contains a rotting haunch of deer meat swarming with insects and a wooden trough filled with water. A tunnel at the back of the compound serves as the cockatrice's lair. The tunnel is 8 feet wide, 8 feet tall, and 20 feet long, ending at a 20-foot-wide by 30-foot-deep cave.

Creatures (EL 5): Two female cockatrices are here and attack anyone who enters save Rumble or Perika. Searching the area reveals four cockatrice eggs and 1d12+2 feathers.

Cockatrices (2): hp 27 each; *Monster Manual* 38.

5. Perika's Garden. The three remaining gnome statues are here, along with a variety of flowers and fruit trees.

Creatures (EL 1): The petrified gnome miners are named Sylar Gilgore, Creeky Waters, and Tessikin Brightcandle.

6-7. Entrance to Giants' Lair. This is the rear entrance to the giants' lair. Tunnels are 20 feet high throughout, while chamber ceilings are 20-25 feet high.

The tunnel veers to the right for 20 feet before forming a natural staircase leading up. As you ascend the large stairs, shadows begin to play off the rocks and jagged walls of the cave. The stairs open into an 80-foot by 100-foot chamber. Atop a large table in the middle of the room sits a burning oil lamp. The walls are painted with scenes depicting giants hunting and rock-throwing. A large chest and immense bed of furs dominates the north wall. On the south wall, shelves hold jars of various sizes. A makeshift rock stove is set into the nearby wall. Piled along the east wall are several rocks.

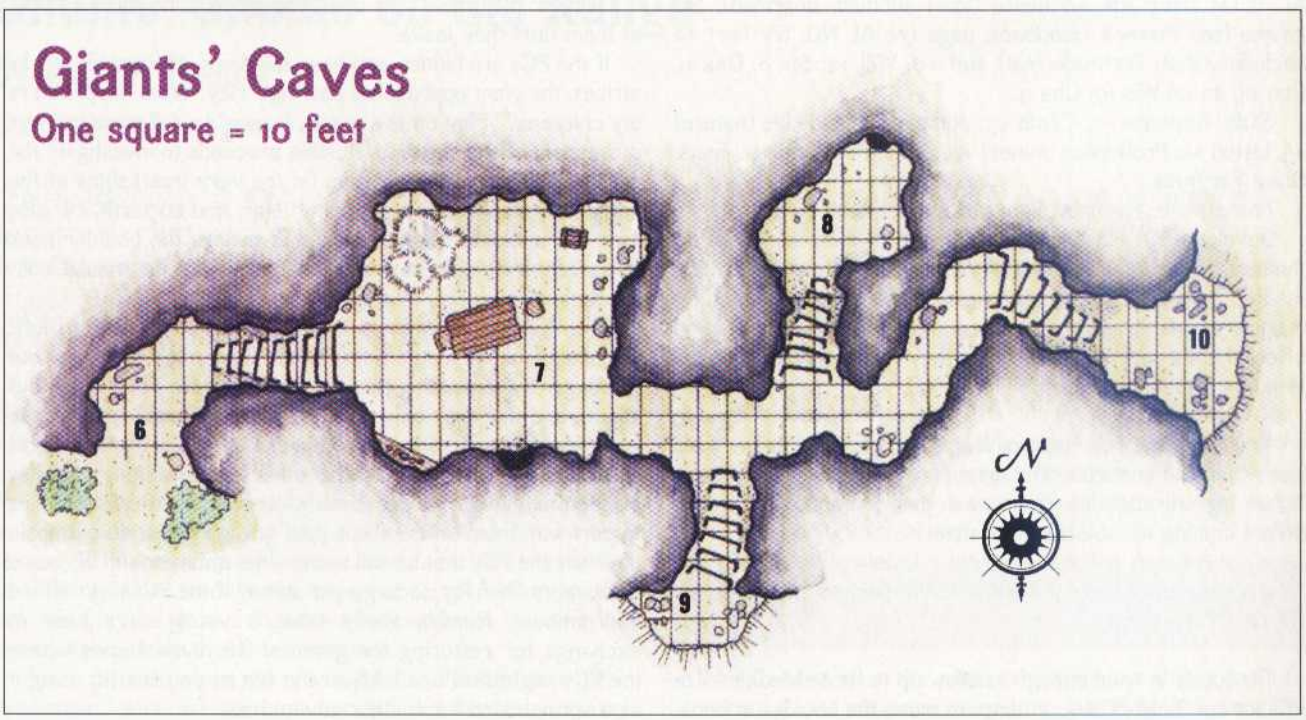
The stove contains ashes, the jars hold foodstuffs, and the barrel is filled with drinkable water. The bucket is empty (it is used to transport water from area 8) and fastened to a frayed, 100-foot-long rope. The **Treasure** is contained in the chest.

Creatures (EL 10 if both giants are present): If the PCs have somehow managed to get this far without making a ruckus in areas 3-6, they find Rumble and Perika seated at the table. The giants attack anyone who enters from areas 6 or 9.

Treasure: The chest is unlocked and holds several stone giant-sized garments, a stone flute (worth 80 gp; 20 pounds), *gauntlets of ogre power,* a *potion of reduce,* and a small, unlocked wooden box. The box holds a 1-foot-long wand made of ivory with an obsidian stone mounted on its tip. This is the *wand of stone to flesh;* it has 22 charges remaining. These items rest on a bed of 200 pp, 2,000 gp, and 4,500 cp. The giants' bed consists of fifteen furs worth 50 gp apiece.

8. Lavatory. A flight of natural stairs descends to a 30-foot by 50-foot chamber. Water drips from the ceiling into a 2-foot-square orifice that drops into darkness for 100 feet. The shaft ends at a 2-foot-wide crack that empties into an underground river flowing toward the sea. The giants use this shaft and its swiftly flowing stream to obtain water and dispose of waste.

9. Balcony. Natural stairs connect the giants' lair to a 40-foot by 25-foot ledge that overlooks the vale 120 feet below. This is where Perika stands as she attacks the PCs while they're in the yard. There are ten throwing rocks piled here.



10. Front Entrance. This ledge forms the front entrance to the giants' lair and sits 10 feet up the side of the mountain. Piles of boulders are stacked on both sides of the entrance.

Creatures (EL 10 if both giants appear): If PCs announce their presence by making a lot of noise, the giants come to investigate in 1d4 rounds. They're cautious but friendlier than if the PCs trespass in their yard and kill their "chickens." They negotiate the return of the statues, but if one of the giants makes a successful Intelligence check (DC 15), it realizes that the only way the PCs could know about the statues is if they have already trespassed. Further negotiations will be more difficult as the giants become increasingly hostile unless the PCs can convince them that they did not invade their privacy.

If the PCs enter the giants' caves without permission, they encounter Rumble and Perika in area 7. Although the giants are initially infuriated by the intrusion, they can be calmed if the PCs quickly explain themselves and are not armed; otherwise the giants attack (see area 3 for statistics).

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs successfully retrieve the statues of the petrified gnome miners, they should receive half experience points for Rumbles and Perika regardless of whether they defeated the giants in combat. If the PCs succeed in restoring the gnomes to flesh, give them full experience points for the giants.

Further Adventures

Befriending Rumble and Perika might prove beneficial to the party. The giants can be quite agreeable and make trustworthy friends. They might call upon the PCs to deliver cockatrice eggs or feathers to a variety of customers. The giants could also ask PCs to fetch them a young cave bear or two. Rumble might restore the gnomes in advance if the PCs promise to return with a cave bear.

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure was designed for four average 7th-level PCs, but the challenges can be modified to suit a lower- or higher-level group as follows:

5th- to 6th-level PCs: Reduce the number of cockatrices in area 3 by one, and both Rumble and Perika should have lower than average hit points (drop their maximum hit points by 15 each).

8th-level PCs: Add one cockatrice to area 3, and give Rumble and Perika each two levels in the warrior NPC class.

9th- to 10th-level PCs: Add two cockatrices to area 3 and one cockatrice to area 4. Give Rumble and Perika each two or more levels of fighter.

This module contains roughly 52,000 gp in treasure. You will need to adjust the amount of treasure to match the party's starting leve using the following simple formula:

Total GP Value in Treasure = Party's Average Level × 7,500 gp.

PCs who kill the giants could use the lair as a launching pad for other adventures in the area. Perhaps the giants' in-laws drop by for a visit or the lair is visited by a friendly or not-so-friend client seeking cockatrice eggs or feathers. Ω

Originally titled "Mosh's Mine," this adventure teaches heroes not to play in the chicken coop and inspired many cute teaser lines around the office ("Beware of fowl play," "They're finger-lickin' good!" and the popular "Stoned gnomes"). Anthony lives in Soledad, California, and this little gem is his first published adventure in DUNGEON Magazine.

Nodwick
www.nodwick.com
by Aaron Williams
AN ADVENTURE BEGINS...
BUT IS IT ART?
I'D LIKE IT BETTER IF IT WAS A PLANTER...
MAYBE THEIR FACTORY SHOWROOM IS IN HERE. LET'S LOOK!
A FOE IS MET...
LOOK OUT! COCKATRICUSES! UM, COCKSATRICYCLES... SAY, WHAT IS THE PLURAL OF "COCKATRICE," ANYWAY?
"STATUE FACTORIES."
A TRUCE IS FORGED...
YOU WANT ME TO GIVE UP MY STONE GNOMES FOR A SECRET BLEND OF HERBS AND SPICES? WHY?
BECAUSE YOU'LL MAKE A FORTUNE! I CAN SEE IT NOW: "KENTUCKY PETRIFRIED CHICKEN!"
WHAT'S A "KENTUCKY?"
I DUNNO. IT SOUNDS GOOD, THOUGH.
AND ALL IS...WELL...
GIVE IT A CHANCE, PIFFANY. HE'S MORE DURABLE, HE CAN CARRY MORE, AND HE WON'T GET TIRED! BESIDES, I DON'T HEAR HIM COMPLAINING...

Natural Selection

Celadon Druids Vs. Urnst Rangers

by Matthew G. Adkins

artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi • cartography by Christopher West

"Natural Selection" is a D&D adventure designed for four 5th-level PCs. The story takes place between the months of Harvester (end of summer) and Patchwall (beginning of autumn) on the fifth day of Brewfest, a week-long harvest celebration. The adventure is set in the Duchy of Urnst, a location that could easily be dropped into an ongoing campaign, as noted in the "Adapting the Adventure" sidebar. The party should include a mix of classes, although a ranger or druid would be a great asset in the wild. No particular alignments are required to run the adventure, as the PCs will be working for pay. Time is a critical factor, so you will need to keep careful track of its passage.

Magic Items Monsters Non-Player Characters (NPCs) Objects Settlements Traps

Adventure Background

The Celadon Forest, located on the Duchy of Urnst's eastern border, has been shunned and feared for nearly a century. Occupied by a group of druids known as the Council of the Thorn, the forest invites few visitors. Ten years ago, a green dragon named Lakaradermaz made its lair in the woods. For months, the Council attempted without success to rid themselves of the monster, whose voracious appetite and destructive nature upset the natural balance of the area. Their plans foiled, the Council withdrew to hallowed grounds in the south of Celadon to discuss other options.

After weeks of debate, the head of the Council, a gnoll named Mardack, decided that the only recourse was to seek outside assistance. Traveling alone, Mardack marched into the capital city of Leukish and demanded to speak with the duke. Shocked and intrigued at the druid's arrival, Duke Karll held an immediate audience. For hours, the pair wrangled and bargained, eventually hitting upon an agreement.

Duke Karll agreed to send his Royal Pathwardens—a group of rangers who had pledged allegiance to the duchy—to help defeat the wyrm. In return, the Council would grant the northern third of Celadon to the duchy as well as the majority of the wyrm's treasure. The one condition placed upon the land's secession was that the area would not be despoiled. In fact, the only people who were allowed to settle the land were the Royal Pathwardens themselves, whose close ties with nature the druid could appreciate.

Within a few days, a combined force of Pathwardens, druids, and *charmed* animals stormed the dragon's lair. The coalition emerged triumphant, though with heavy losses. As was previously agreed, the largest percentage of the wyrm's trove went to the duchy, while the Council took only a few select items. The surviving Pathwardens were welcomed home in a victory celebration and awarded a generous share of the dragon's hoard. The commander of the Pathwardens, Major Lucien Dedermont, claimed a valuable magic item as part of his cut: a necklace bearing thirty *beads of stasis*. These beads play a pivotal role in the development of the story of this module.

Capitalizing on his new land, the duke immediately ordered the construction of a small keep. After its completion a year later, the entire complement of Royal Pathwardens moved into the stronghold. Placed under the command of Lucien, the fort quickly became known as Dedermont's Keep.

For the past eight years, the arrangement between the Council druids and the Pathwardens has worked out well, each occupying Celadon Forest with little complaint. True to his word, Duke Karll has discouraged further human intervention by decreeing the northern forest "royal land," though he frequents the wood's fringes to hunt for sport. Problems began two weeks ago, when Duke Karll and his retinue came across the ravaged corpses of three prize bucks. Outraged, Karll summoned Lucien to the scene to find an explanation.

Using his superior tracking skills, the ranger determined that the deer had been slain by a bulette. The duke, disturbed by the thought of such a vicious monster lurking within his borders, ordered Major Dedermont to take his rangers and clear the duchy's third of Celadon Forest of monster inhabitation. Lucien, a pacifist, argued against the command. He agreed to stop the landshark but maintained that what few monsters still dwelled in the area had a right to live there as long as they posed no threat to the duchy. Unswayed by the ranger's pleas, the duke insisted his decree be carried out.

Adapting the Adventure

This adventure can be adjusted for parties of different sizes or levels by modifying the antagonists. Here are some suggested changes designed to make the adventure fair yet challenging:

1st- to 2nd-level PCs

- Extend the adventure's timeline so the PCs have more time to rest and recuperate between encounters.
- Remove one of the ankhegs encountered on the way to the keep.
- Halve the number of male kobolds and dire rats in Dedermont's Keep.
- Remove one troll, harpy, and displacer beast from the keep encounters. Remove either the ochre jelly or both carrion crawlers from the keep's cellar.
- Make the bulette an adolescent specimen by lowering its Hit Dice and damage.
- Remove most or all of Mardack's scrolls and all of Larenth's potions.
- Lower the levels of each druid by 2 and remove Grask and/or Adelmar from the Council roster.
- Give the PCs more ways to win the Mardack's trust, or allow one of the PCs to battle Adelmar in ritual combat to win Major Dedermont's freedom.

3rd- to 4th-level PCs

- Remove one displacer beast, carrion crawler, and harpy from the keep encounters.
- Remove Mardack's scrolls.
- Lower the level of each druid by 1. If this is too difficult, consider removing Adelmar and/or Grask.

6th- to 7th-level PCs

- Add an ankheg to the encounter on the way to the keep.
- Double the number of kobolds within the keep, or replace them with goblins or hobgoblins.
- Add another troll (Optack) to the keep's roster and add one more carrion crawler to the keep's cellar.
- Make it more difficult for PCs to speak with Mardack, and throw in some challenging random encounters on the way to Thorn's Circle.

8th- to 9th-level PCs

- Add two ankhegs to the encounter on the way to the keep
- Replace the kobolds in the keep with hobgoblins or bugbears.
- Give the harpies 1d3 levels of sorcerer or cleric.
- Add two more trolls (Optack and Meldarsh) to the keep's roster, and give each troll 1d3 levels of barbarian.
- Use the Advancement rules in the *Monster Manual* to increase the size and strength of the bulette.
- Give Grask a *ring of counterspells* with *flame strike* cast into it, and raise the levels of each Council druid by 2.

Alternate Settings

This adventure can be adapted to campaign worlds other than the GREYHAWK setting by making a few changes in location, as detailed below. Other conversion opportunities do exist, as this list is not all inclusive.

FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign: Change the setting of the adventure to the city of Lyrabar, located within the Vast region of Faerûn. Dedermont's Keep is located in the easternmost portion of the Gray Forest, a large wood located north of Lyrabar.

DRAGONLANCE Campaign: Change the locale of the adventure to the city of Calinhand, located in the Balifor region of Ansalon. Dedermont's Keep is positioned in the southwest portion of the Beast's Run, a sprawling forest to the east of Calinhand. Also note that the members of the Council of the Thorn should be cast as clerics of Chislev, as druids do not exist on Ansalon.

Lucien returned to his keep with a heavy heart. He respected Duke Karll's wishes but believed he had given the matter little thought. Meeting with his loyal rangers, Lucien voiced his concerns and gained his followers' support. Together, the rangers devised a strategy that satisfied Karll's demands and Lucien's desire to leave the beasts unharmed. Using the *beads of stasis* Major Dedermont had claimed years ago, the rangers would capture the monsters and take them south, beyond Karll's land, where they would be released back into the wild.

The morning after their meeting, the Pathwardens departed the keep and broke up into search parties, each carrying several *beads* from Lucien's collection. The Pathwardens remained afield for eight days, catching even the most reticent beasts before heading back home. By the time they returned to the fort, the rangers had captured every monster in the wood; or so they thought. Unknown to Lucien, a kobold named Efner fled south to the druids, telling Mardack embellished tales of the human's actions to the north. The druid's natural distrust of humans overrode his normal wisdom, as he assumed that the rangers were gathering the monsters for some baleful purpose. The gnoll declared his compact with the duchy ended and Major Dedermont, as leader of the transgressors, at fault.

With the aid of his fellow druid, Harldam, Mardack deduced from Efner's observations that the rangers were using *beads of stasis*. Mardack planned a strike to free the captured monsters while simultaneously exacting revenge upon the humans. One stormy night, which the druids arranged to coincide with the rangers' return to the keep from the field, the Council approached the fort under the cover of darkness. Casting multiple *obscuring mist* spells, the druids ringed the fortress in a thick blanket of fog. With the haze as cover, the druid/rogue Adelmar slipped inside the keep and searched for the *beads*. Upstairs, he found Dedermont's necklace with a few empty *beads of stasis* remaining. He found the rest of the *beads* in the cellar and, using a *read magic* spell, uttered the command words etched into the *beads*, releasing the monsters within.

Chaos reigned in the keep as monsters suddenly boiled up from the cellars. Guards manning the outer walls abandoned their posts and rushed inside to aid their besieged comrades. Hidden by the mist, the druids used *call lightning* spells to blow open the gatehouse doors, taking their fight straight to the rangers. Confronted on two sides, the Pathwardens' defense quickly crumbled. Amid the disorder, Adelmar fled the keep and gave Dedermont's necklace to Mardack. The gnoll druid then confronted Lucien directly and captured him within one of his own *beads of stasis*.

With the capture of Major Dedermont and the defeat of his Pathwardens, the Council of the Thorn left the freed monsters to fight among themselves for survival. The druids returned to their sacred glen to the south, Thorn's Circle, to make their hostage atone for his crimes. During the next new moon, Mardack plans to sacrifice Dedermont and send his severed head to the duke as a grisly and unmistakable notice of the treaty's termination.

Adventure Summary

Concerned about the fate of his Royal Pathwardens, Duke Karll sends his Lord Chamberlain, Drevis, to find some able-bodied adventurers to investigate rumors that Dedermont's keep has been overrun by monsters.

The PCs arrive at Dedermont's Keep and confront the monsters within. Inside the keep they find clues that suggest why the keep was attacked. They also encounter Gregory, a Pathwarden survivor, who describes the attack on the keep and offers to help the PCs find the missing Major Dedermont.

The PCs track the Council of the Thorn to a sacred glade dominated by a circle of standing stones. There they must convince Mardack to release Dedermont from the *bead of stasis* or overcome the gnoll druid and his followers.

Starting the Adventure

The druids' assault of Dedermont's Keep occurs five days prior to the PCs' involvement. The next new moon comes to pass on the 1st of Patchwall, exactly four days after the adventure begins. This time frame can be altered as you see fit—decreased to provide maximum suspense or increased if the PCs are struggling to get through the module. Overall, the PCs should have at most one week to complete their mission.

Three days ago, Lucien Dedermont failed to attend the beginning of Brewfest, a day when all the duke's vassals gather in Leukish. Having heard no word from Dedermont, Karll dispatched a squad of soldiers the next morning to investigate the ranger's truancy. The day before the adventure's start, the warriors returned without their sergeant, jabbering that the keep had been overrun with monsters. From their panicked account, the sergeant was mesmerized by a "winged demon" (harpy) and carried away right before his soldiers' eyes. Since their return, word of the soldiers' findings has spread like wildfire among the populace of the duchy, causing unrest.

Deeply concerned for the welfare of his Pathwardens, the duke is desperate for information from the keep but does not dare send his soldiers into the region. The soldiers are superstitious of the dark forest, and Karll fears any orders to enter the Celadon Forest will be met with rebellion. To make matters worse, his court wizards are presently absent from the duchy, enjoying thee Brewfest celebration in Greyhawk City. Out of options, the duke has decided to seek hired assistance. To this end, he has sent his Lord Chamberlain, Drevis, to find a trustworthy group of adventurers to scout the area.

The text below assumes that the PCs begin in Nellix, a town north of the Celadon Forest, where they hear word of Drevis's need of adventurers. When you are ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

During Brewfest, Nellix is a colorful and lively town filled with dozens of flamboyant performers winding their way through the crowded streets while swallowing swords and belching forth flames. All manner of people crowd the lanes.

Though the mood of the city is festive, a dark undercurrent seems to have insinuated itself within the celebration. Rumors abound of the fall of Dedermont's Keep, a stronghold inside nearby Celadon Forest. When mention of the keep is made, smiling revelers turn suddenly somber and speculative. Details are scant at the moment, but one thing is for certain: The people of Urnst want the matter explained. With the fell woodland so close by, no one will feel entirely safe until this bit of intrigue is solved. The latest gossip on the streets, still warm from the lips of the rumormongers, is that the duke's chamberlain, a nobleman named Lord Drevis, is searching for a group of adventurers willing to travel to the keep. So far, Drevis has had no takers on what most say is a generous offer, as it appears the town's slim adventuring populace is content to celebrate Brewfest undisturbed.

If the PCs have no trouble locating the Lord Chamberlain, as every gossip in town knows the nobleman is awaiting prospective groups in the town's square. After a little walking and pushing through the crowds, the PCs reach the square and spots Drevis immediately, recognizing his embroidered cloak and decorative longsword as the trappings of a noble. Drevis stands outside the finest inn in Nellix, the Dancing Marionette, shooing away street urchins who sporadically run up and tug at his cloak, teasing the nobleman on its finery.

As the PCs approach, Drevis turns toward them, his hazel eyes sizing them up. When the PCs express an interest in the commission of scouting Dedermont's Keep, Drevis goes over the details of the mission carefully. The PCs are given a window of one week to complete the job, as the duke's wizards are due back in Leukish at that time and Karll does not wish to appear inept at handling problems without their assistance. The assignment consists of three tasks that the PCs must accomplish to receive a payment of 500 gp each upon completion of the mission. These tasks are:

- Verify that the keep's fall has really occurred.
- Determine what has taken place at the fort, including who is at fault for the keep's downfall.
- Account for all fifteen Pathwardens who lived within the keep, rescuing any who are still alive and bringing back the Pathwarden rings (see area 5 of Dedermont's Keep for details) of those who are deceased as proof of their deaths.

After explaining the arrangement, Drevis answers any questions the PCs have to the best of his ability. He knows about the treaty between Duke Karll and the druids of the Celadon Forest. His knowledge of the Council of the Thorn is limited to the name of its leader: Mardack. Drevis has no idea that the druids attacked the keep and isn't suspicious of them at this time. If the PCs specifically ask why Karll doesn't send in the army to reconnoiter the locale, Drevis gives a rather vague explanation of "political considerations." If queried as to what each Pathwarden—or Major Dedermont in particular—took as his share of the dragon's hoard, the Lord Chamberlain shrugs and says he's not really sure. Finally, any attempts to haggle with Drevis are met with a firm stare that conveys the certain unwillingness of the Lord to bargain.

Of Dedermont's Keep itself, Drevis knows little besides its history, as he has never visited the stronghold.

If the PCs attack Drevis, he flees the square only to return a few minutes later with a full retinue of guards (as detailed by you, the DM) to arrest the PCs. If the party refuses Drevis's employment offer, he simply nods and politely bids them a good day. If the group accepts the job, he provides general directions to Dedermont's Keep, wishes the PCs good luck, and promises to wait for them at the Dancing Marionette with their payment until the 4th of Patchwall.

Creature (EL 4): Lord Drevis, a cousin of the duke, is a willowy, middle-aged man standing 6 feet tall and weighing 145 pounds. He has receding salt-and-pepper hair and vibrant

hazel eyes. His skin is dull white from spending so much time indoors. Drevis talks in slow, accentuated Common and is polite and cordial at all times. He has a genial personality and has been chamberlain for nearly twenty years.

Lord Drevis, Male Human Ari5: CR 4; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 5d8; hp 28; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, masterwork dagger); or +3 melee (1d3 subdual, unarmed strike); AL LG; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +10 (includes Skill Focus feat), Gather Information +9, Innuendo +5, Knowledge (history) +4, Listen +6 (includes Alertness feat), Read Lips +8 (includes Skill Focus feat), Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (Dwarven), Speak Language (Draconic), Spot +6 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Read Lips).

Possessions: Decorative longsword (not a practical weapon, but worth 75 gp), masterwork dagger, embroidered cloak (25 gp), belt pouch (containing 12 gp, 15 sp, and 24 cp), 40 gold ingots (50 gp each) in a locked chest in a rented room.

To the Keep

The distance between Nellix and Dedermont's Keep is a little over four miles, easily traversed in a matter of hours on foot or even less time on horseback. When the PCs set out on their journey, read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

> The gentle plains south of Nellix are rife with small farms whose procession continues almost to the edge of the Celadon Forest. From town, the forest is a hodgepodge of riotous colors, autumn reds and golds mixing fluidly with the predominant green and brown tones. The individual trees begin to distinguish themselves only at a close distance, many appearing ancient and weathered with gnarled bark and massive trunks. A soft blanket of fallen leaves covers the forest floor, while thick briars, bushes, and weeds fill in the expanse between the tree trunks. A cold wind, hinting that winter is not far away, disturbs the foliage, moaning forlornly as it travels. The woods convey a wild, primeval majesty.

The party should have no trouble locating the path leading through the Celadon Forest to the keep. The path was blazed during the keep's construction. Since that time, the rangers have maintained the road as best as possible. Surrounded by dense foliage, the path varies in width from 8 feet to 12 feet.

There is one planned encounter as the PCs make their way to the keep. Feel free to run additional random encounters, but these should not include too many unnatural creatures, as most of the region's monsters are gathered around Dedermont's keep. The planned encounter involves a pair of ankhegs who have wandered from the forest proper (see **Creatures** below).

Creatures (EL 5): Before they reach the edge of the Celadon Forest, the PCs hear a man's scream coming from a nearby homestead. If the PCs investigate, they learn that the shouts seem to originate from behind a farmhouse, where a shocked farmer watches an ankheg—still half buried in the soil—root through the contents of his overturned vegetable cart. A second ankheg gorges on the remains of the farmer's cow, Adelle.

The PCs have 2 rounds to aid the frightened homesteader before the ankhegs turn their attention toward him. If assailed with ranged weapons or spells, the ankhegs burrow into the dirt, each digging underneath a random PC and bursting out of the ground to attack (treat as a charge attack). If the PCs charge the ankhegs, the monsters hold their ground. Each ankheg fights until reduced to half hit points, at which time it sprays its closest opponent with acid and flees. These ankhegs are among the monsters released from Lucien's *beads of stasis* and are well-removed from their normal territory. Since their liberation, the beasts have gradually worked their way north until hitting upon the cattle-rich farms of Nellix.

Ankhegs (2): hp 30, 28; see *Monster Manual* 18.

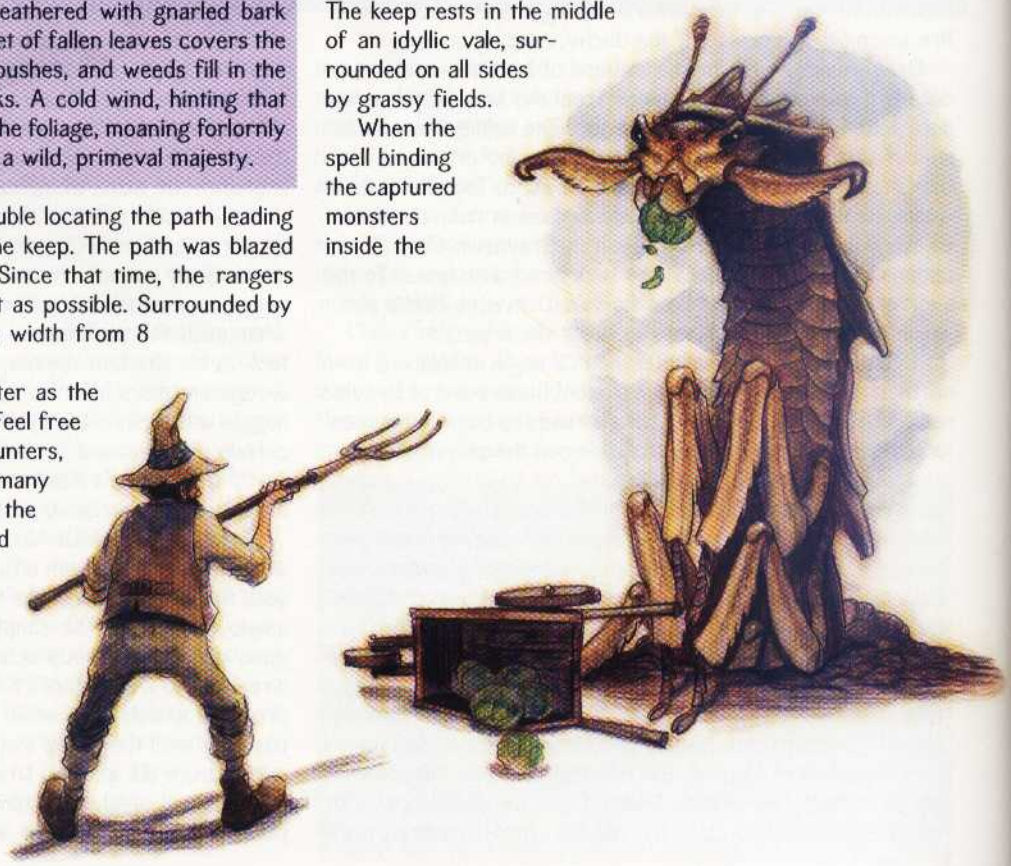
Development: The farmer, Ned Furrows (male human Com1), profusely thanks the PCs for their assistance and offers them free room and board for the night in recompense, as he has nothing else of value. Ned is a simple farmer of plain description, with brown hair and eye. He has little imagination beyond dreams of owning his own herd of sheep. At present, he tills his tiny plot of land. He is unmarried and without children.

Dedermont's Keep

The keep is not the turreted wonder that its name brings to mind. Built more to protect its occupants from the dangers of the wilderness than to hold a strategic position, Dedermont's Keep is actually nothing more than a modest manor house surrounded by a wooden palisade.

The keep rests in the middle of an idyllic vale, surrounded on all sides by grassy fields.

When the spell binding the captured monsters inside the



beads of stasis was broken by Mardack, some of the beasts fled the compound as quickly as possible. Many, however, stayed behind to battle the Pathwardens. Having slain their captors, these creatures remain within the fort, which now serves as a convenient lair. As such, when the PCs reach the keep, they find it infested with monsters.

As things stand now, the stronghold is controlled by two trolls (see areas 9 and 14) who maintain a tenuous alliance with a pair of harpies (see area 16), and this "gruesome foursome" is served by a clan of kobolds known as the Tribe of the Red Eye. The harpies have claimed the upper story of the keep as their lair and barely tolerate the trolls on the ground floor. The trolls are lazy, bullying and beating their kobold charges. Creatures of lower intelligence also lair within the keep, but the trolls have little incentive to organize an attempt to clear them out.

Running the Kobolds

Of particular note is the Tribe of the Red Eye, whose members have tired of the rule imposed on them by the trolls. Once a proud and independent tribe, these kobolds have been forced to perform demeaning, menial tasks ever since their release from the *beads of stasis*. The trolls hold the kobold children captive, using them to quell any thoughts of rebellion. Although the kobolds yearn for freedom, they dare not oppose the trolls alone for fear of bringing harm upon their young.

Seldank, the crafty kobold leader of the tribe, hit upon a plan to free his kin a few days ago, after the appearance and subsequent routing of the duke's soldiers. Realizing that there would be more soldiers to follow, Seldank reasoned that the next group to come along might be willing to help his clan if properly persuaded. Wanting to be the first to encounter any new scouts the duchy might send, Seldank dropped subtle hints to Garsh (the bigger troll) that having the kobolds scout the keep's exterior would be wise. Eventually the dull-witted troll picked up on the idea, which he believed to be his own, and ordered Seldank to begin patrolling the vicinity. Since that time, Seldank has led countless reconnaissance missions about the stronghold. When the PCs get within a quarter of a mile from the keep, they are spotted or tracked down by Seldank and his warriors.

The encounter with the kobolds occurs just before the PCs enter the clearing surrounding the keep. See the **Creatures** section below for statistics on the kobold scouting party. Wishing to remain out of sight of the stronghold, the kobolds move to block the party's approach, an easy enough task given their familiarity with the surrounding terrain. With his warriors hidden in the nearby foliage (treat as 50% concealment), Seldank stands where to PCs are sure to see him and waits for them to come into view, at which point he raises his arms in a gesture of parley and awaits the party's response.

The course of the meeting is dictated from this point on by the PCs' actions. Seldank speaks Draconic. If the PCs are willing to parley with him, he describes how his tribe's children are being held captive by the trolls and asks for the party's help in freeing them. In exchange for the PCs' assistance, Seldank provides information on the keep's layout and current occupants and promises to withdraw his tribe once it is safe to do so, leaving the keep and all its treasures to the PCs.

Provided the PCs agree to help, Seldank answers any questions they might have about the keep, though he has detailed information only about areas 1-3, 7, 9, and 14-18. All the other regions of the keep are off-limits to the kobolds for one reason or another. Seldank feigns ignorance when asked questions about the fate of the rangers, fearing that the truth might frighten away the PCs. (If pressed, he admits that some of the rangers were slain; still, there *might* be survivors.) As for how the monsters came to be in the keep, the only explanation the kobold offers is: "The rangers came to our clan-home and used powerful magic on us. Then we woke up here!"

After answering queries, the kobold chief uses a small jar of reddish mud (war paint) to paint the forehead of each PC with the symbol of an open eye. Seldank explains that this rune, called "The Eye of the Dragon," will let the kobolds within the keep know that the PCs are allies. After marking the PCs, Seldank and his scouts resume their patrol, conveniently avoiding the keep for several hours while the PCs do their work. Seldank does not commit himself or any of his warriors to the upcoming battle, as he is worried that the trolls might harm the tribe's young if they see kobolds helping the opposition.

If the PCs attack the kobolds, they retreat to the keep to report the PCs' presence to their troll masters. If the PCs refuse to help Seldank free his clan but do not attack immediately, the kobolds allow them to pass without incident but then circle around the party, enter the keep through the hole in the wall (see area 2), and warn the trolls of the PCs' approach.

Creatures (EL 3): The kobold patrol consists of Seldank and six of his strongest aides. The kobolds flee a fight unless cornered, preferring to gather reinforcements at the keep.

Male Kobolds (6): hp 4 each; see *Monster Manual* 123.

Chief Seldank, Male Kobold Bbn2: CR 2; Small Humanoid (Reptilian) (3 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 2d12+2; hp 17; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, short sword); +5 ranged (1d4+1/crit 19-20, thrown dagger); SA rage 1/day; SQ uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, illiteracy; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +5, Intuit Danger +6, Listen +7, Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +6. *Feat:* Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Leather armor (emblazoned with painted red eye), short sword, three daggers, silver brooch (25 gp), belt pouch (containing 3 gp, 15 sp, and 12 cp).

Description: Seldank is the strongest kobold in his tribe. Something of a genetic oddity, Seldank has orc blood in his veins. Leader of his clan for over sixty years, the powerful kobold rules by might. Despite his iron-fisted tactics, Seldank has only the best interests of his clan at heart, which is why he is so determined to remove the tribe's oppressors.

The Bailey (Areas 1-6)

This section details the gatehouse and other outlying structures not connected to the main keep.

1. Gatehouse.

A 20-foot-high stone gatehouse rises above the north wall of the palisade. At one time, two 10-foot-tall oak doors blocked entry. At present, however, the easternmost door lies on the ground inside the postern, torn from its hinges and scorched by fire, while the westernmost door is absent. A lowered iron portcullis was intended to seal off the courtyard beyond, but two bars near the center of the portcullis have been bent outward, forming a gap wide enough to step through.

The doors to the gatehouse were blasted open by multiple *call lightning* spells, while the portcullis bars were bent apart by a pair of summoned bears. The first floor of the gatehouse is an arched passageway that leads into the courtyard (area 3). The second floor is completely enclosed in stone and designed to house archers while the keep is under attack.

A pair of metal ladders allow creatures on the palisade to reach the gatehouse roof. The crenelated roof of the gatehouse holds a pair of ballistae and a few dozen ballista bolts stacked in loose piles. A trapdoor in the roof leads down to the second floor, where three arrow slits perforate each wall and murder holes in the floor allow archers to rain down arrows on intruders passing beneath.

The winch mechanism used to raise and lower the portcullis once resided on the second floor but has since been relocated—along with the missing gatehouse door—to area 14.

2. Palisade. These 15-foot-high palisades ring the keep on all sides, protecting the compound. Walkways are reached by means of metal ladders bolted to the inside walls at various points along the fortification.

A large gap violates the western wall, providing an alternative entry point into the bailey. The half-splintered logs on either side of the gap bear deep claw marks. This cleft was excavated by a bulette released from a *bead of stasis*. A faint trail of blood, almost scrubbed clean by the elements, leads from just outside the hole to the stables (area 5). The blood is from a recently slain deer that the displacer beasts in the stables dragged through the breach back to their lair to consume.

3. Courtyard.

Strewn about the courtyard are the chaotic remnants of a recent battle. Corpses, many of them human, lie scattered about, their dried blood speckling the brown grass. Flies flitter about the carnage, their drones adding a soft backdrop to the harsher sounds of tearing flesh. Several circular burn marks dot the area, each approximately 2 feet in diameter.

The "tearing flesh" noises are caused by a pack of dire rats gorging themselves on the rotting remains (see **Creatures** below). This site was where Lucien Dedermont and his rangers made their final stand against the monster horde. After the major was captured by Mardack, the resistance quickly crumpled. If the PCs take time to count the dead, they find the bodies of five rangers, three kobolds, a carrion crawler, two giant spiders (actually phase spiders), a pair of black bears, and the charred carcass of a 9-foot-tall troll.

Examining the Pathwardens' bodies reveals a morbid variety in their deaths. Two of the five rangers were burned to death (by *call lightning* spells). These rangers each lie close the circular burn marks on the ground. Another pair have been pummeled and clawed to death, their arms broken and skulls caved in. The fifth ranger was killed by a phase spider's poison and still has a purple pallor about her face. The dead bodies carry a few items, as detailed in the **Treasure** section.

Creatures (EL 4): Ten dire rats, their fur glistening with blood, emerge from the corpses and attack PCs who approach within 10 feet of the carnage.

Dire Rats (10): hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* 57.

Treasure: The varied corpses on the battlefield hold a number of items that might be useful. Each of the kobolds has a bone club, dagger, and small wooden shield emblazoned with a painted red eye as well as a small leather pouch containing 1d6 cp. Searching the Pathwarden corpses turns up eight daggers, three short swords, two longswords, a greataxe, three suits of leather armor (emblazoned with the Pathwarden symbol, a

capitol "P" surrounded by wreaths), and five belt pouches containing a total of 24 gp, 15 sp, and 48 cp.

In addition, each ranger wears a small silver Pathwarden ring—an oval-faced signet ring with the Pathwarden symbol upon it—worth 5 gp each.

4. Well. This nondescript, 6-foot-diameter covered well has a standard winch and bucket system for retrieving water. The well's shaft plunges 30 feet, where it connects to a slow moving subterranean branch of the Nessler River that flows near the keep. Any PC so foolish as to jump down the well sustains 1d6 points of damage from the fall and rudely plunges into the icy water. The stream then carries the PC roughly a mile south underground before rejoining with the Nessler, providing precious few air pockets along its meandering path.

5. Stables.

A simple, 10-foot-high wooden stable has been built in the northwest corner of the stronghold, using the wood palisade to form its north and west walls. Both doors to the building have been knocked from their hinges and lie just inside the doorway, allowing the aroma of rotting straw to waft out of the structure. A wagon loaded with three heavy sacks of oats rests against the wall just north of the stable.

The stables are occupied by a mated pair of displacer beasts freed from the beads of stasis (see **Creatures** below). Just inside the doorway lies the severed head of the Pathwardens' second-in-command, Lieutenant Jastil. Felled by the displacer beasts, Jastil was dragged into the stables and consumed. His remains, identified by a silver bar on the collar of his torn uniform, lie in the southernmost stall atop a pile of blood-stained hay. His body has it a number of valuables, as described in **Treasure** below. Searching the other stalls reveals nothing useful beyond the gnawed bones of four horses, several deer, and a few dire rats.

Creatures (EL 6): The displacer beasts have their run of the bailey and outside wilderness, coming and going to hunt as they please through the gap in the west palisade. When the PCs reach the stables, roll d%. On a roll of 01-40, one of the displacer beasts is out searching for food; on a roll of 41-60, both monsters are out scavenging.

Displacer Beasts (2): hp 56, 41; see *Monster Manual* 59.

Tactics: If encountered in their lair, the displacer beasts hide in the northernmost stalls until the PCs approach within 10 feet, at which point they lash out from inside the stalls with their tentacles. PCs are entitled to a Spot check opposed by the beasts' Hide checks to notice the monsters and ruin their surprise. The beasts pursue the PCs if they attempt to flee but do not enter the manor house. The displacer beasts fight to the death to defend their new home.

Treasure: Searching Jastil's corpse turns up a Pathwarden ring (see area 3 for a description); a belt pouch containing four gold trade bars (20 gp each), 47 sp, and 28 cp in loose coinage; two daggers; a longsword; a broken longbow (easily *mended);* a ruined suit of studded leather armor (emblazoned with the Pathwarden symbol); and a quiver containing four *+1 shock arrows* that miraculously survived the carnage. Each arrow's shaft is etched with a tiny symbol resembling a lightning bolt.

6. Jakes. These wooden outhouses are featureless except for the northernmost one, whose door is propped open by the legless corpse of a Pathwarden. The female ranger was killed, partially devoured, and discarded by the same ankhegs the PCs faced on the trip to the stronghold. Searching the body reveals nothing of value beyond her Pathwarden ring (see area 3 for a description); all of the ranger's other possessions were destroyed by the ankhegs' acid.

The Manor House (Areas 7-22)

The oak mansion stands two stories high and once housed the Pathwardens and all of their belongings. The floors of the mansion are of polished hardwood with a few noted exceptions. All doors within the manor house are 2-inch-thick wood. The windows of the mansion are fixed panes of thick, frosted glass that allow sunlight to enter while obscuring sight. Rooms typically contain two or more brass braziers for use during dark hours, but all braziers are unlit when the PCs arrive.

The ceilings on the first floor are all 8 feet high, with the rooms' braziers hanging at a height of 7 feet on brass chains. The cathedral ceiling of the second floor slopes to an 18-foot-high apex in area **16**. Thick wooden rafters run parallel with the floor at a height of 10 feet, with vertical struts that bolster the ceiling along its spine. Braziers dangle from the support beams on short brass chains.

Oak Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break (DC 18); Open Lock (DC 25).

Frosted Window: 1 in. thick; Hardness 1; hp 3; Break (DC 5); Open Lock (DC 21).

7. Foyer.

This sparsely appointed room serves as the entry hall. A pair of life-sized statues adorn the room. The northeast statue depicts a middle-aged man in half-plate armor, a greatsword raised above his head in victory. The pedestal of the sculpture is engraved with the words "Duke Karll, Ensuring Our Freedom." The southwest statue portrays a ranger down on one knee with an enormous longbow drawn and ready to fire. The base of this sculpture is engraved with the words "Major Dedermont, Lord of the Keep." A 5-foot-diameter puddle of blood congeals in the center of the room, obviously days old. Thin streaks lead from this pool through a doorway to the west.

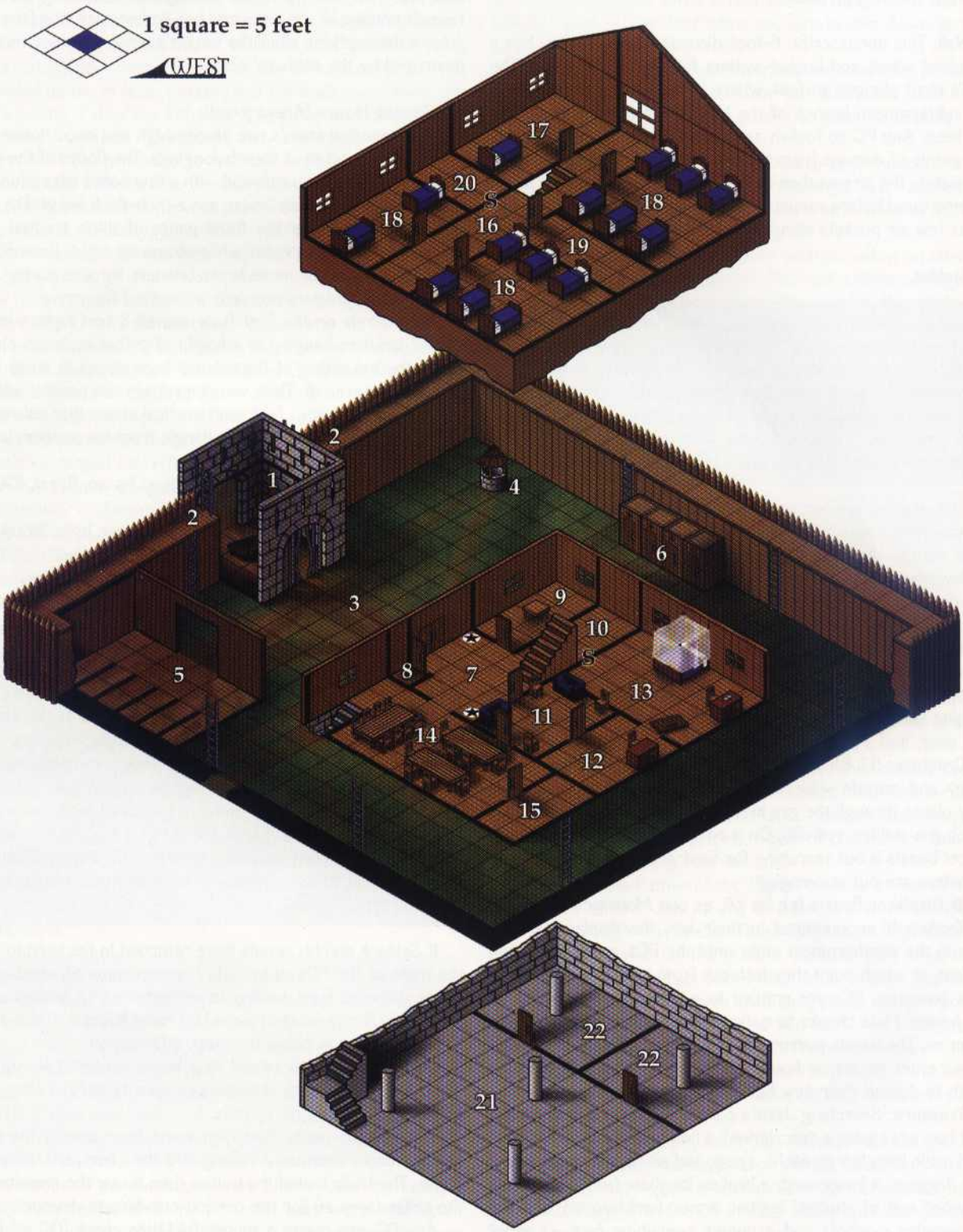
If Seldank and his scouts have returned to the keep to warn the trolls of the PCs' approach, the occupants of areas 9 and 14 are gathered here, waiting to ambush the PCs as they enter. Otherwise this room is occupied by three kobolds. Refer to the **Creatures** section below for more information.

Just inside the threshold is a large, ornamental rug (see **Treasure** below). Both statues are expertly carved from gray marble and weigh 500 pounds.

The rangers made their first stand here against the monstrous horde, eventually spilling into the courtyard. After the battle, The trolls looted the bodies then threw the remains into the cellar (area 21) for the carrion crawlers to devour.

Any PC who makes a successful Listen check (DC 10) hears Garsh's raucous voice emanating from area 9. The troll is speaking the Giant tongue; PCs who understand the language hear a barrage of insults and curses mixed with cruel laughter.

Dedermont's Keep



Creatures (EL 1/2): Three bored kobolds loiter about the room, occupying their free time by defacing the statues of Duke Karll and Major Dedermont with their daggers, carving crude leers on their lips and open eye symbols on their chests. The kobolds are automatically surprised when the PCs enter unless the PCs are so foolish as to announce their arrival with loud noises.

Male Kobolds (3): hp 3, 1 (×2); AC 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 small wooden shield emblazoned with a painted eye); see *Monster Manual* 123.

Tactics: If Seldank bestowed upon the PCs his tribe's painted eye symbol (See "Running the Kobolds"), the kobolds recognize the mark and withdraw to area **18**, leaving the PCs unmolested. On the other hand, if the party is not allied with the tribe, the kobolds raise an alarm as soon as they recover from their surprise, causing enough racket to alert the occupants of areas **9**, **14**, and **16**. They then attempt to retreat upstairs to area **16**, fighting the PCs if unable to escape.

Treasure: Lying before the double doors is a large woven rug depicting Dedermont's Keep against a fiery orange sunset. The rug is worth 45 gp for its craftsmanship.

Development: Combat in this room has a 10% cumulative chance per round of attracting the occupants of areas **9** and **14**, who arrive in 2 rounds. There is also a 50% cumulative chance per round that the harpies in area **16** are alerted, but they do not investigate the disturbance, instead waiting for someone to climb the stairs.

8. Cloak Room. This tiny room holds dozens of pegs to hang cloaks as well as a series of ankle-high shelves lined with boots. At present, the cloak room contains five brown cloaks, eight dark green cloaks, three black cloaks, and three sets of boots. One pair of boots is magical (see **Treasure** below for details).

Treasure: The magic boots are *boots of varied tracks* left here to dry by one of the Pathwardens after the rangers' week-long excursion into the forest. These particular *boots* allow the wearer to leave horse, rabbit, stag, or wolf prints.

9. Rec Room.

This chamber was once a recreation room. Dart boards hang on the pock-marked south wall. Smashed gaming tables lay in the northeast corner, shoved into a large pile reaching well over 5 feet high. In the center of the room stands a lone card table spared from the general destruction but missing its chairs. Around the table stand four small, scaly humanoids with tails and a tall, emaciated creature with mottled green and gray skin, all engrossed in some kind of game using bones. Upon the table sits a collection of gems and coins.

The scaly humanoids are kobolds, while the tall creature is the troll Garsh, who can be found here at all hours of the day playing *cruk*, a goblin game using human finger bones painted different colors. Cruk requires five players; therefore, Garsh periodically collars kobolds to come and toss the bones with him. When the PCs arrive, the kobolds are losing horribly, much to the troll's delight. Garsh and his sycophants are further detailed in the **Creatures** section below.

Upon the card table rests a pile of miscellaneous valuables that constitute the pot of the cruk game, as detailed in the **Treasure** section below.

Creatures (EL 5): Garsh wields a massive greatsword taken from the armory (area **10**), though he discards the blade and fights with his claws if reduced to half hit points. The troll must be destroyed by fire or acid soon after being felled; otherwise he regenerates lost hit points at a rate of 3 per round and rises up to give chase as soon as his hit points are above zero.

Garsh, Male Troll: hp 63; see *Monster Manual* 180.

Male Kobolds (4): hp 4, 3 (×2), 2; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 small wooden shield emblazoned with a painted eye); see *Monster Manual* 123.

Tactics: As soon as Garsh sees the PCs, he orders the kobolds to attack, wading into combat after they soften the opposition for a round. If the party bears the mark painted by Seldank, the kobolds surprise the troll by turning to attack him instead. If any of the kobolds survive the ensuing melee, they refuse to accompany the PCs to any other area of the manor, as they are afraid of bringing harm upon their children. PCs not inscribed with the mark are attacked as Garsh directs.

Treasure: The hoard on the table includes a scroll with the spells *delay poison, detect snares and pits,* and *magic fang* (all scribed at 4th level), an expertly cut kornerupine stone (150 gp), a hunk of beige cassiter crystal (50 gp; see below), six sets of silver eating utensils (35 gp total), a gold-rimmed leather dagger sheath (30 gp), a pair of silver hoop earrings encrusted with paste jewels (8 gp), five large blue quartz crystals (5 gp each), four Pathwarden rings (taken from the ranger corpses in area **21**; see area **3** for a description), eighteen silver trade bars (1 gp each), and 30 pp, 60 gp, 60 sp, and 50 cp in loose coinage. The cassiter crystal is presently in its rough, unhewn form. If cut by someone with the Craft (gem-cutting) or Profession (jeweler) skill who succeeds at a skill check (DC 15), the crystal yields a small, colorless, multifaceted gem known as a raindrop (500 gp). An unsuccessful check mars the crystal and halves its value (250 gp).

Development: Combat in this room alerts the occupants of area **14**, who arrive in 2 rounds to investigate.

10. Armory. The door to the armory has been torn asunder, shattered by Garsh when he and Kelmz pillaged the room. Shelves bearing melee weapons, shields, and suits of armor adorn the north and east walls, while the south wall boasts three barrels containing arrows and a rack of bows. The contents of the room are itemized in the **Treasure** section below.

The secret door in the south wall leads to area **13**, the master bedroom, and can be detected with a successful Search check (DC 20). Any PC with the Profession (carpenter) skill who makes a successful skill check (DC 15) reduces the difficulty of finding the secret door to DC 18. The manor's current occupants are unaware of the secret door and therefore do not use it. The door is accessed on the armory side by turning the arrow barrel directly in front of it—which is attached to the floor—one rotation clockwise. After a loud click, the secret door swings open, remaining open for 5 rounds before automatically shutting itself.

Treasure: All things accounted for, the room holds 32 daggers, 12 short swords, 8 longswords, 6 scimitars, 6 hand axes, 3 rapiers, a greataxe, 5 shortbows, 4 longbows, a composite longbow, 250 arrows, 6 suits of leather armor, 2 suits of studded leather armor, a *+1 chain shirt,* a suit of scalemail, and 5 small steel shields. All of the armor and shields are emblazoned with the symbol of the Pathwardens.

11. Lounge. The lounge is a cozy, windowless parlor room once used by the Pathwardens. Two couches and three easy chairs rest in various spots about a magnificent area rug (see **Treasure** #1 below). Cushions lie in haphazard fashion upon the floor, tossed there by Garsh and Kelmz as they searched for valuable trinkets.

Underneath the rug in the center of the chamber is a tiny secret compartment, built into the floorboards. A Search check (DC 25) is required to find the cubbyhole, with success resulting in the searching character noticing an odd squeak beneath the rug. Once the carpeting is rolled away, a "X" section of the floor can be pried up to reveal the compartment. Inside is a cache of elixirs hidden here by the Pathwardens for use in an emergency, as detailed in **Treasure** #2 below.

Treasure #1: The area rug depicts centaurs, unicorns, satyrs, and other forest beasts of legend at play and is worth 200 gp, but hard to transport due to its size and bulk.

Treasure #2: The aforementioned stash of potions consists of three *potions of cure light wounds*, a *potion of remove disease*, a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and a *potion of fire breath*. Each of the concoctions is contained in a tiny steel vial sealed with wax and clearly labeled in Common.

Development: Combat in this room has a 10% cumulative chance of alerting the occupants of area **14**, who arrive in 2 rounds to investigate.

12. Study.

Oak bookshelves, each standing 10 feet high, line the walls of the chamber. Books fill the shelves, all penned in Common judging from their spines. Against the south wall, amid a pair of bookcases, stands a large reading desk. There is no chair, however. Behind and above the desk hangs a map of Celadon Forest with handwritten entries on both margins.

The map behind the desk is depicted on the adjacent page; give the players a photocopy or hand-drawn duplicate of the map at this time.

The Pathwardens used the map to plan how best to capture and relocate the monsters of Celadon Forest. The desk before the map is actually a mimic (see **Creature** below) that took up residence here after being released. Garsh knows of the mimic and has ordered others to avoid the area.

The books in this room deal with the history and politics of the duchy, heraldry, war tactics, and similar topics. Hidden among the tomes, requiring a successful Search check (DC 25) to locate, is a scroll (see the **Treasure** below).

Creature (EL 4): The mimic, masquerading as a desk, waits patiently for one of the PCs to rifle through its "drawers" before attacking, automatically gaining surprise. PCs who carefully survey the room can make a Spot check (opposed by the mimic's Disguise check) to notice something imperfect about the desk, such as a slight movement caused by respiration, thus negating the mimic's surprise.

Mimic (1): hp 53; see *Monster Manual* 135.

Treasure: A divine scroll has been folded and tucked inside the pages of a book on common law in Urnst. The scroll is of unknown origin and contains the spells *shield other* and *sound burst*, both scribed at 3rd-level.

13. Dedermont's Bedroom.

The door to this room has been knocked down and lies just inside the doorway. Beyond is a spacious bedchamber containing a number of luxurious furnishings, including a full-length standing mirror, a claw-footed bath tub, a dresser, a night stand, and a chest of drawers. A small bookcase stands against the south wall, next to a writing desk and chair. An open book sits atop the desk. Against the east wall rests a four-poster canopy bed stacked high with blankets and pillows. Beside the bed stands a human-shaped wooden stand made to hold armor, though it is currently not in use.

This spacious master bedroom served Major Dedermont until his recent capture. Three braziers hang from the ceiling. Under the fallen door is a small rug (see **Treasure** #1 below).

The room's large bed is made of a burnished cherry wood frame carved with intricate scrollwork. The headboard bears an elaborate mural depicting a group of elves hunting deer. The mural is carved in such a way that the scene seems to change as it is viewed from different angles. The canopy surrounding the bed, as well as the sheets and pillow cases that cover it, continue the mural's theme, depicting the elven hunt from start to finish.

PCs searching the room find personal effects, such as extra clothes, socks, old letters, and so forth. The small bookcase to the south stands untouched, though it holds only Dedermont's personal journals and a few volumes of poetry. The book on the desk is one of the major's diaries, penned in Common and open to the last two entries:

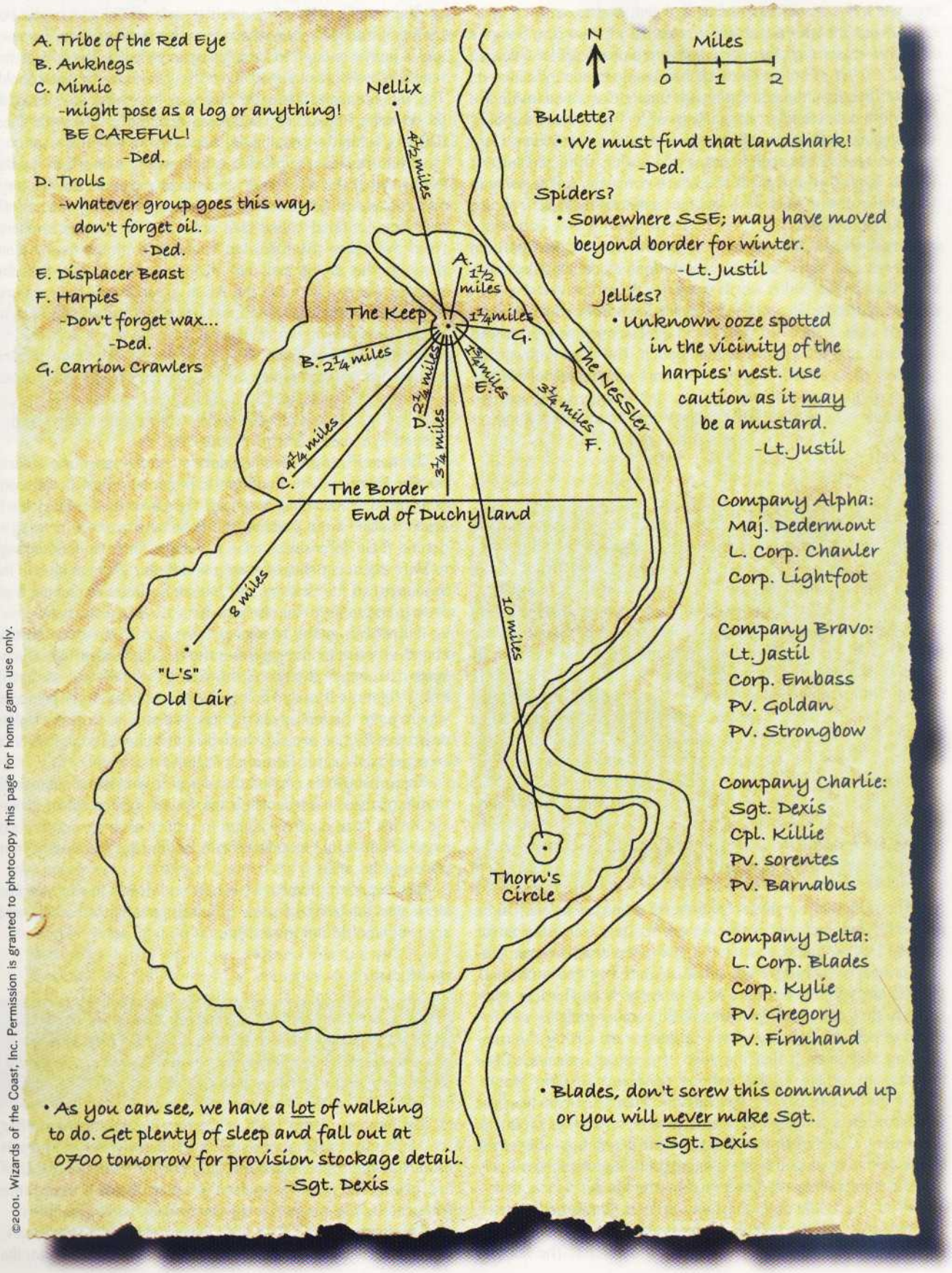
Harvester 19th, 591 CY
It is within these pages that I find comfort as I prepare for tomorrow. I have made the right decision and my fellow rangers support it wholeheartedly, yet I cannot help but feel guilt. I dislike playing the trickster. After a lengthy staff meeting, I divided our force into four hunting parties. At sunrise, we begin the laborious task of moving the monstrous denizens of Celadon Forest far south of the duchy's border, out of the duke's sight where they will hopefully remain. By Ehlonna, I hope everything goes as planned.

We must finish our work by the start of Brewfest, as I am expected to attend the duke in Leukish on that day. I could leave the responsibility of completing the project to my able subordinates, but I will not pass this cup from my lips. I have drawn the wine and now must drink it 'til its last, bitter drop.

Harvester 27th, 591 CY
I hover on the edge of sleep. After a rough eight days spent in the forest and miles upon miles of marching, every fell creature north of the duchy's border is in our hands. No one was seriously injured—a testament to good planning—although Corporal Embass suffered minor wounds from a troll. For the time being, I have stored our "prizes" in a crate in the cellar, to be taken south at the conclusion of Brewfest.

I grow weary and must rest. Tomorrow marks my trip to Leukish, and I must be well-rested and alert. A sudden thought crossed my mind earlier today as I wondered what the Council of the Thorn would regard our actions here. I must send a missive explaining our deeds before I depart.

Players' Handout: Dedermont's Map



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The secret door to the north can be opened on this side by depressing a hidden pressure plate left of it. In all other respects, the door functions as detailed in area 10.

Across the entire northeast expanse of the room hangs a massive spider web. Formerly home to a phase spider released from a *bead of stasis*, the web has been abandoned since its former occupant had a run-in with Garsh. Cocooned inside are the desiccated bodies of a Pathwarden and three kobolds. Untangling all four corpses is a slow process, requiring no less than 10 rounds of careful cutting and pulling at the webbing. If fire is applied to the mesh, the entire construct burns away in 3 rounds, leaving the bodies and their possessions (see **Treasure** #2 below) behind.

Treasure #1: The rug underneath the door to the bedroom portrays a group of scantily clad dark elves dancing around a roaring bonfire and is worth 15 gp.

Treasure #2: The webbed kobolds each have four daggers, a bone club, a small wooden shield (emblazoned with a painted red eye), and 1d6 cp in a leather pouch. The dead Pathwarden carries a longsword, masterwork short sword, suit of leather armor (imprinted with the Pathwarden emblem), Pathwarden ring (see area 3 for a description), and pouch containing 20 gp, 12 sp, and 25 cp.

14. Dining Hall.

This long room was once a mess hall. Three massive oak dining tables dominate the room, two to the south and one to the north. The south tables each have chairs to accommodate four people, while the third table seats eight, although not very comfortably. Plates of food, days old and rotting, cover the tables. Signs of battle are everywhere, from spilled drinks and jostled chairs to sword marks on the tables and spent arrows jutting from the walls.

A set of stairs lead down in one corner. The flooring about the stairs has been ripped apart, leaving a jagged hole roughly 10 feet wide in its place, which is covered by a crudely assembled wood platform. The platform is connected by means of ropes and pulleys to a hastily mounted winch in the northwest corner. One wall of the manor has been knocked out as well, forming a 10-foot-diameter hole that has been haphazardly patched with what appears to be the missing door from the gatehouse.

The troll Kelmz makes this room his home, as he likes to be near the basement where he keeps his pets (see area 21 for details). When the PCs enter the room, the troll is either eating a meal prepared by the kobolds in area 15 (70% chance), or playing with his crawlers in area 21 (30% chance). In addition to the troll, there are five kobolds eating here as well.

The holes in this west wall and floor were left by the rampaging bulette as it fled the keep after being released. Claw marks are visible in the various sundered wooden planks. After the bulette plowed through the dining hall (startling the Pathwardens), a deluge of freed monsters followed from the basement. Caught off guard and overwhelmed, the rangers fell back to the foyer and made a stand, but they were eventually forced outside into the courtyard by the horde.

After the battle with the Pathwardens, Garsh ordered the kobolds to patch the hole in the west wall, which he dimly perceived as a weak point in the manor's defenses. The kobolds complied by dragging one of the felled gatehouse doors around the manor and bolting it, with Kelmz's help, to the outside wall.

The wooden lid that covers the stairs to the cellar was built by Kelmz using lumber taken from the storage room (area 19) and is heavy enough to keep his pets confined. The lid was fastened to a winch snatched from the gatehouse by the kobolds. The winch enables Kelmz to raise and lower the lid. Lifting the lid covering the stairs requires a successful Strength check (DC 25), with a +5 equipment bonus if the winch is used.

Creatures (EL 1, 5 if Kelmz is present): If Kelmz is in the dining hall when the PCs enter, he immediately runs to the winch and raises the lid covering the stairs, releasing the carrion crawlers confined below (see area 21). The crawlers emerge from the cellar the following round and attack every living thing in the dining hall not including Kelmz, but including kobolds. Kelmz can raise the lid as a partial action; creatures of Medium-size or smaller must use a full round action to lift the lid, with or without the winch.

Kelmz, Male Troll: hp 59; see *Monster Manual* 180. He carries two leather leashes for the carrion crawlers in area 21.

Male Kobolds (5): hp 4 (×2), 3 (×2), 1; AC 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 small wooden shield emblazoned with a painted eye); see *Monster Manual* 123.

Tactics: PCs who bear Seldank's painted mark are ignored by the kobolds, who continue eating their meal despite any commands from Kelmz to attack the party. If the PCs clearly are not allied with Seldank, the kobolds retreat to area 15 to defend their defenseless tribe members, shouting loud enough to alert the occupants of area 9 and Kelmz (if the troll is in the basement) to the presence of intruders. Reinforcements from area 9 arrive in 3 rounds to investigate any disturbance.

If Kelmz is in the basement when the PCs enter, the troll comes upstairs to investigate at the first loud disturbance (loud speech, combat, shouts of the eating kobolds and so forth). Kelmz fights fearlessly until reduced to negative hit points, at which point he collapses to the ground in a heap. Unless destroyed by fire or acid, the troll gives chase to the PCs once more as soon as his hit points regenerate.

Kelmz brings his carrion crawler pets with him if summoned to one of the other rooms by the sounds of combat or shouting. Kelmz takes a partial action to secure each carrion crawler to a leather leash so that he can discourage the beasts from attacking his allies.

Development: Combat or other loud noises in this chamber alerts the denizens of area 9, who appear in 2 rounds, and area 16, who do not investigate.

15. Kitchen.

Grills and stoves line the south wall, their flues connecting with pipes leading outside. Spices, preservatives, and jarred vegetables sit on a rack to the northwest, while a pegboard of cooking utensils hangs on the northeast wall.

The females of the Tribe of the Red Eye take turns staffing the kitchen, preparing meals for the hungry trolls and harpies as well as the tribe's warriors. Some of the spices on the shelf are prized for their rarity (see **Treasure** below); these were gathered by the rangers from places deep within the forest.

Creatures (EL –): If the PCs bear Seldank's painted mark, the kobolds ignore the party and continue cooking. If not, the

females huddle together as a group and slink into a corner. The females do not enter into combat, fleeing at the first opportunity if attacked. PCs slaying these defenseless kobolds should receive no experience points and might be subject to a change in alignment for the heinous deed.

Kobold Females (3): hp 2 each; AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atk none; see *Monster Manual* 123.

Treasure: The valuable herbs on the spice rack include a pound of dried, ground cloves in a bottle (15 gp), three small jars of saffron (3 gp each), and a shaker full of ground ginger (3 gp). As the seasonings are not labeled, it takes a successful Profession (cook) check (DC 10) to realize the nature and value of these spices.

16. Hallway.

Large piles of white droppings begin about halfway up the stairs and continue on into the hall. The hallway has large windows at either end. The west window has been shattered, with all the pieces of glass plucked from the frame and left lying on the floor before the sill. Gnawed animal bones and greasy black feathers line the floor of the hallway.

The droppings come from a pair of harpies that inhabit the area (see **Creatures** below). The filth on the floor hides a number of coins detailed under **Treasure** #1. From the ceiling hang a total of ten braziers, all of which need be lit at nighttime to properly illuminate the hall.

Lying atop a great nest wedged among the support rafters is a partially consumed corpse, one booted foot dangling in full view. The corpse is all that remains of the sergeant of the squad dispatched by the duke two days ago. While his men explored the keep's perimeter, the sergeant was noticed by the harpies, *charmed*, taken back here, and devoured. The corpse has a number of possessions (see **Treasure** #2 below), while the nest contains a few items of interest (see **Treasure** #3).

The secret door in the north wall requires a Search check (DC 25) to discover. The door remains open for 6 rounds before automatically swinging shut. None of the keep's present inhabitants know of the secret door or the treasury (area **20**) behind it.

Creatures (EL 6): This hallway is home to a pair of harpies. They perch on the rafters and watch the door to area **17**, keeping the kobold children confined. In exchange for this service, Garsh rewards the harpies with shiny baubles and kegs of ale. The harpies come and go through the shattered window.

Harpies (2): hp 35, 31; see *Monster Manual* 117.

Tactics: If alerted to the PCs' presence, both harpies are alert and ready to swoop down upon the first PC who ascends the stairs. There is a chance (25% during the day, 50% at night) that the harpies are inebriated, suffering a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks and losing the ability to *charm* foes (their slurred voices having lost their magical persuasiveness). Slipping past the harpies unnoticed requires magic or a successful Hide check (opposed by the harpies' Spot checks). The high ceiling allows the harpies to make flyby attacks. Sober harpies begin any combat by using their captivating song ability to *charm* foes.

Treasure #1: Anyone taking the time to pick through the squalor on the floor finds a total of 25 gp, 40 sp, and 30 cp among the muck, as well as a dagger minus its sheath.

Treasure #2: The sergeant's body lying in the nest has a masterwork longsword, a light crossbow, 15 bolts, a chain shirt, and 10 gp in a belt pouch. Stitched into the cuff of his right boot is a secret sleeve that requires a successful Search check (DC 13) to discover. The sleeve holds an unmarked, wax-sealed steel vial containing a *potion of heroism*.

Treasure #3: Interspersed among the rotting boughs of the harpies' nest are three brightly polished malachite stones (15 gp each), a large tiger eye agate (25 gp), a *+1 amulet of natural armor*, and a total of 24 gp, 40 sp, and 180 cp in loose coinage. The *amulet* is fashioned from a single gold dragon scale that has been carved into the shape of a shield and threaded with a rough leather cord.

Development: The sound of battle or song alerts the entire second floor to the presence of the PCs, awakening any sleeping kobolds in area **18**, who arrive in 2 rounds to investigate. If the PCs bear Seldank's painted mark, the kobolds help the PCs fight the harpies.

17. Guest Bedroom.

The floor of the room is covered in royal blue carpeting, in the center of which is embroidered a 5-foot-long depiction of the Pathwarden symbol: a capital "P" surrounded by a wreath. A stout hickory bed, stocked well with pillows and blankets, rests against the west wall, with a dresser and night stand to either side. A claw-footed bathtub occupies much of the south wall, while a chest of drawers and a full-length standing mirror complete the furnishings.

The dresser and chest are empty, as they are provided as conveniences for guests to store their travel belongings. At present, the room is home to the children of the Tribe of the Red Eye, who are held captive by the trolls Garsh and Kelmz to ensure the warriors of the tribe don't attempt to depose their masters. When the PCs enter the room, the children run and hide under the bed, crying for their mothers in Draconic.

Since the harpies allow the females of the tribe to visit and feed their young in pairs only, the party also encounters two female kobolds in this room. The females place themselves between the PCs and the children, bearing their teeth at the characters and warning them in Draconic to stay away. The females assume this defensive position whether the PCs bear Seldank's mark or not.

Creatures (EL –): The kobold children put up no fight if attacked by the party, fleeing to under the bed if possible. The females protect their young from harm, using the Aid Another action to improve the AC of the children. The female kobolds put up no fight if attacked but do not leave the room so long as the children remain. PCs attacking either group of kobolds should receive no experience points and might be subject to an alignment change.

Young Kobolds (3): hp 1 each; AC 12 (+1 size, +1 natural); Atk none; see *Monster Manual* 123.

Female Kobolds (2): hp 2 each; AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atk none; see *Monster Manual* 123.

Development: Combat in this room has a 10% cumulative chance per round of awakening the slumbering warriors in area **18**, who arrive to investigate in 2 rounds.

18. Rangers' Rooms. Originally home to the Pathwardens, these three rooms are currently used by the Tribe of the Red Eye. Each room holds a number of plain wooden beds with cedar footlockers. The rooms have been thoroughly searched by the trolls and kobolds, as evidenced by the clothing littering the floor. In general, the rooms are filthy, messy, and reeking of kobold excrement.

Creatures (EL see below): The two larger rooms are occupied by the warriors of the kobold tribe, with the smaller room to the northwest housing the females. When the PCs arrive, the northwest room holds one female kobold (EL 0), while each of the larger rooms holds six sleeping males (EL 1).

The napping female awakens only if shaken or attacked. (The females of the tribe work themselves to exhaustion keeping the occupants of the manor fed and their masters appeased, to the point that they sleep soundly through almost any disturbance.) Sleeping kobolds can be struck down in one blow with a coup de grace attack, though PCs attacking the helpless creatures should receive no experience points and might be subject to a change in alignment.

Sleeping warriors awaken if the PCs are overly noisy. It takes a slumbering kobold 1 round to reach for his weapons and jump out of bed, ready for combat. PCs marked with Seldank's symbol of peace are ignored by awakened kobolds, who return to their beds after sleepily muttering curses in Draconic. Unmarked PCs are attacked immediately, with one member of the tribe fleeing to seek assistance from the trolls in areas 9 and 14.

Female Kobold (1): hp 2; AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atk none; see *Monster Manual* 123.

Male Kobolds (6 per room, 12 total): hp 3 each; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor, +1 small wooden shield emblazoned with a painted eye); see *Monster Manual* 123.

19. Storage Room.

This rectangular room was apparently used to store miscellaneous items. Cleaning supplies, bed sheets, extra lumber, and tools rest neatly atop a series of wide, sturdy shelves. Against the far south wall rest eight wooden wagon wheels, piled into two stacks of four wheels each.

Since the fall of the keep, this room has been given only a cursory examination by the new occupants. Secreted among the collective junk, requiring a successful Search check (DC 15) to locate, is a black cloth pouch with a knotted drawstring, the contents of which are described under **Treasure** below. Also hidden in the room is the sole survivor of the Pathwarden massacre besides Lucien: a private named Gregory Evenhand.

Creature (EL 2): Crouched in the southeast corner of the room, blending in almost perfectly with the walls of the chamber, is Private Gregory Evenhand. Gregory was among those manning the walls when the monsters were released inside the manor house. While patrolling the south wall, Gregory did not hear the cries of battle until the Council of the Thorn made their tumultuous entrance into the keep. Running toward the noise, the young private arrived just in time to see two of his comrades struck down by lightning. Gregory hesitated as he realized that the Pathwardens were losing horribly, and rather than enter the desperate struggle, Gregory used his *cloak of elvenkind* to hide against the palisade. Thus hidden, he watched the capture of Major Dedermont and the slaughter of the rest of his friends, helpless to stop it all.

Once the druids had left the keep, Gregory crept into the manor house and worked his way up to this room, moving carefully with the aid of his *cloak*. Since then, he has left the room on three occasions for food and water, realizing that his *cloak* is not foolproof and fearing detection.

When the PCs first enter the room, Gregory remains hidden in the corner. PCs surveying the room are entitled to a Spot check opposed by Gregory's Hide check (modified by his *cloak*) to notice the private. If detected, or the party turns to leave, Gregory steps out into the open and begs the PCs for water, as the last of his supply ran out that morning. The discovery of the PCs within the keep restores Gregory's confidence, giving him the courage to attempt escape.

So long as the PCs are not aggressive toward Gregory, he speaks with them, although he is obviously skittish. The young ranger can describe the fall of Dedermont's Keep. He knows everything about Dedermont's "monster relocation plan," the Council's assault on the keep, and Lucien's capture, though he is unsure how the druids managed to release the captive monsters, why they attacked the stronghold in the first place, and where they have taken the major. Gregory assumes they have taken Dedermont to Thorn's Circle, where the druids perform their rituals. Gregory speaks of his own cowardice in a bitter tone, obviously distressed by his inability to help his fellow rangers and his lack of courage. As for information about the keep itself, Gregory was too low on the chain of command to know the location of any secret rooms or compartments.

After speaking with Gregory, the PCs should make plans to rescue Major Dedermont. If the PCs speak of going after Dedermont, Gregory volunteers to guide the party to the druids' circle. The young ranger is eager to redeem himself by helping to recover the major. If the PCs do not think of rescuing the major themselves, Gregory proposes the idea in a timid voice. He suggests that they leave immediately. If the PCs refuse to rescue of major, Gregory still accompanies them but remains quiet and withdrawn.

Gregory tries his best to assist the party, using his skills and feats to the best of his ability. He is young, relatively inexperienced, and anxious to please, but he is not stupid. Gregory never puts himself purposefully in harm's way, although he gladly helps the PCs battle foes.

Gregory Evenhand, Male Human Rgr2: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 2d10+2; hp 18; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/crit 18-20, rapier with Weapon Finesse feat), +3 melee (1d4+2/crit 19-20, dagger); +5 melee (1d6+2/crit 18-20, rapier with Weapon Finesse feat); or +5 ranged (1d4+2/crit 19-20, thrown dagger); SA favored enemy (aberrations); SQ Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting (in light or no armor), Track; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +5 (includes Lightning Reflexes feat), Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills: Animal Empathy +3, Heal +5, Hide +7 (+17 with *cloak of elvenkind*), Intuit Direction +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Speak Language (Elven, Gnoll), Spot +4, Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse (rapier), Track (bonus feat).

Possessions: Leather armor (emblazoned with Pathwarden symbol), *cloak of elvenkind*, rapier, three daggers, Pathwarden ring (see area 3 for a description).

Description: Gregory weighs 150 pounds and has black hair, brown eyes, and skin the color of burnished wood. The cloak he wears was given to him by his great uncle, a retired ranger whose influence ultimately led Gregory to enter the Pathwardens in search of adventure.

Treasure: Inside the hidden black pouch is a smaller cloth bag containing a healer's kit (see *Player's Handbook*, page 110) with ten uses.

20. Hidden Treasury. Hidden behind a secret door is the keep's treasury. Here, Dedermont stores all the funds appointed to him by the duke to maintain the fortress as well as other items of value that the Pathwardens have obtained. The secret door to the room functions as described in area **16**.

A small iron chest rests against the north wall (see **Treasure** #1 below). Above the chest is a small wooden shelf, upon which rests some magic items (see **Treasure** #2). In the southeast corner, near the entrance, lay three logs (see **Treasure** #3).

Treasure #1: The chest is not trapped but has a complex lock that requires a successful Open Locks check (DC 25) to open. Dedermont has the only key. Inside the chest are several items: a bar of solid silver (100 gp), three gold ingots (50 gp each), 16 gold trade bars (20 gp each), 30 silver trade bars (1 gp each), and 37 gp, 158 sp, and 296 cp in loose coinage.

Locked Wooden Chest: 2 feet wide × 1 foot deep × 2½ ft. long; 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Open Lock (DC 25).

Treasure #2: The shelf above the chest holds two items. The first is a *lyre of building*, used to help the duchy's engineers construct the keep in record time. The *lyre* has been in the rangers' custody ever since, as the duke has left it to their safekeeping until he has need of it again. The second item is a fat, white *candle of truth* given to the Pathwardens last year by a grateful wizard whom they rescued from marauding orcs.

Treasure #3: The logs in the corner are darkwood, a magic substance prized for its light weight and ability to be fashioned into items of superior quality. (See page 243 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.) The rangers ran across a darkwood sapling felled by a storm a few weeks ago while patrolling the forest. Rather than let the precious tree go to seed, they carried it back to the keep, where it was sawed into segments and treated with oils for preservation. Each log is worth 60 gp to an interested buyer, though they rot into uselessness in 2d4+1 weeks and must be sold before then.

The Cellar (Areas 21-22)

The walls of the basement, unlike the rest of the house, are of solid stone. The ceiling here is only 6 feet high, forcing overly tall PCs to stoop as they move about. Thick stone pillars carved in the image of scowling dwarves provide structural support for the manor above. The entire level is far cooler than normal for the season, mainly due to the presence of the cold, underground stream that runs nearby. The roaring of the stream can be detected with a successful Listen check (DC 10).

21. Dry Stockroom. This large chamber was once used to hold dry foodstuffs and various other supplies for the Pathwardens. When the rangers returned from the field, Major Dedermont came here and packed the occupied *beads of stasis* in a small wooden coffer, storing them here for later transport.

Splattered with gore and claw marks cover the walls and floor. Strewn about are the unidentifiable remains of six creatures killed during the chaos when the beasts were first released, since picked clean by a pair of carrion crawlers (see **Creatures** below). Splintered fragments of wood and tufts of hay line the floor of the cellar—the remains of food crates previously stored here. Heaped by the stairs are the corpses of four rangers, all partially eaten. Searching the bodies turns up the **Treasure**.

Creatures (EL 6): Two carrion crawlers dwell here. Kelmz the troll treats the disgusting scavengers as a human might treat dogs. With his high Fortitude save modifier, Kelmz has little to fear from the crawlers' paralyzing attack, and they don't find troll flesh very appetizing. Kelmz keeps his pets well fed and has even had leather collars with detachable leashes fashioned for each one.

Carrion Crawlers (2): hp 25, 18; see *Monster Manual* 29.

Tactics: Provided Kelmz has not already released his pets, the crawlers mindlessly move to attack the PCs as soon as they enter the cellar, paralyzing as many PCs as possible.

Treasure: PCs searching the Pathwardens' corpses find 20 daggers, five short swords, three rapiers, two longswords, three ruined suits of leather armor (bearing the Pathwarden symbol), and two small steel shields (emblazoned with the Pathwarden emblem). There are no Pathwarden rings on these corpses, as their valuables are in Garsh's possession in area **9**.

22. Cold Storage.

Frost has formed on the door mantle and walls. Near the center of the room stands a carved pillar, around which is gathered a collection of barrels marked "Ale" in Common. Scattered about the rest of the chamber are boxes and barrels, each marked in Common as containing some type of perishable foodstuff, from venison to corn. From the looks of things, the rangers had enough food stocked up to last them well through the coming winter.

These two areas are identical in size and function. The north larder contains fewer foodstuffs than the south one, as Kelmz periodically takes supplies from the north room up to the kitchen (area **15**). When the PCs first enter the south room, they spot a human skeleton laying on the floor near the ale casks, encased in a transparent orange-yellow skein. The skein is an ochre jelly, described below in the **Creatures** section. On the floor beside the jelly is a Pathwarden ring; see the **Treasure** section below for details.

Creature (EL 5): If the PCs approach the skeleton, it seems to animate, rising off the floor in one fluid motion to attack with thick, slime-coated arms. Though it might appear undead at first, this is actually an ochre jelly in the process of consuming Sergeant Dexis of the Pathwardens. Dexis was in the storage room fetching a keg of ale when the monsters were released. Before Dexis could investigate the noise in the next room, the ochre jelly slithered under the door and attacked him, catching the sergeant by surprise and slaying him. Since then, the jelly has been resting here, slowly dissolving the ranger's bones. The trolls and other denizens of the manor are unaware of the ochre jelly.

Ochre Jelly (1): hp 45; see *Monster Manual* 145 (ooze).

Treasure: Alongside the ochre jelly is a single Pathwarden ring (see area **3** for a description). The ring belonged to Dexis and could not be digested by the jelly.

To the Rescue!

The distance between Dedermont's Keep and Thorn's Circle is roughly 12 miles, but most of this distance must be traversed through thick forest bereft of paths. Assuming Gregory is with the PCs and guiding them, the PCs should have no fear of getting lost, yet their travel rate is still hampered by the terrain. Movement within the forest is reduced to half as the PCs are forced to break their own path through the dense undergrowth. When the party is a quarter-mile from the Circle, Gregory locates a rough animal trail that heads in the direction the PCs are traveling. If the PCs opt to take the trail, it leads them to the clearing and allows them to move at their full movement rate for the remainder of the trek.

Once again, there are no random encounters for this segment of the adventure. Only the bulette stands between the PCs and Thorn's Circle. At some point (as determined by you), the party's vibrations are picked up by the bulette, which just happens to be in the vicinity and hungry. The bulette and its method of attack are detailed below in the **Creature** section.

The party's approach to the druid vale is noted by a number of woodland creatures, many of which are on good terms with the Council druids. By the time the PCs are within 2 miles of Thorn's Circle, word of their approach reaches the ears of Mardack. The gnoll druid casts a *scry* spell, sizing up the strength and number of PCs and using what he learns to properly prepare the Council for the PCs' arrival. PCs can detect Mardack's surveillance with a successful Scry check (DC 20).

The PCs can avoid detection by Mardack's animal spies, but this is difficult. Celadon Forest teems with wildlife, all flourishing under the protective eye of the Council of the Thorn. Ultimately, you should dictate how successfully the PCs escape notice, with the consideration that the PCs are on the druids' home turf. Reaching Thorn's Circle unobserved might require such magic as *invisibility* and *silence* spells.

Creature (EL 7): Due to the large number of trees and the size of their ancient roots, the bulette is forced to confront its prey on the surface rather than approach the party through the earth. With its great size and ponderous footfalls, the landshark has no chance of surprising the PCs as it crashes through the forest toward them. Once combat is joined, the bulette attacks ferociously until reduced to 30 hp or less, at which point it rethinks the wisdom of confronting the PCs and flees into the forest, moving 80 feet per round.

Bulette (1): hp 90; see *Monster Manual* 28.

Thorn's Circle

Thorn's Circle is a small, natural clearing used by the Council of the Thorn for rituals and sacrifices. In the middle of the dell is a crystal clear spring whose waters are slowly circulated by a tiny subterranean branch of the Nessler River. The pool and its pure ground water are often used by the druids in their rites. Standing close to the pond is a blood-stained sacrificial altar formed of three slabs of unhewn granite. Surrounding the altar and the spring is a traditional druidic ring of standing stones—eight granite archways standing nearly 10 feet high and 12 feet wide. Finally, encompassing these arches is a thick wall of briars, roses, and other thorn-bearing bushes.

Created by the druids to keep out unwanted guests, animal or otherwise, the thorn barricade stands roughly 20 feet high and 10 feet thick. Though nonmagical, the thorn wall has been meticulously crafted over the years through the careful use of spells. Using the Woodland Stride ability, the druids are able to move easily through the barrier from one side to the other without harm. In cases of novice or apprentice druids who do not possess this power, those lacking are not allowed to participate in any druidic ceremony until they have mastered the art of Woodland Stride.

Any creature forced into or attempting to move through the thorn wall takes 20 points of damage per round of movement, minus 1 point for each point of the creature's AC. Dexterity bonuses to AC and dodge bonuses do not count.

PCs can force their way through the wall. To make any progress, a PC must succeed at a Strength check (DC 15). A successful PC moves a number of feet equal to her Strength check result minus 14, so a PC who rolled 20 on her Strength check could move 6 feet in a round. Moving through the thorns automatically deals damage, as noted above. A PC trapped in the thorn wall who chooses to remain motionless avoids taking additional damage.

A 5-foot-wide, 5-foot deep section of the thorn barrier has 25 hp. A path can be hewn through the barrier with a slashing weapon. The wall has fire resistance 5, cold resistance 5, and electricity resistance 5. The thorn wall is susceptible to spells that affect plants, such as *diminish plants, control plants,* and *antiplant shell.*

Attempting to scale the thorny wall requires a successful Climb check (DC 15), with the climber taking damage per round spent climbing (as noted above).

Creatures standing on one side of the thorn wall have nine-tenths concealment (40% miss chance) from creatures on the other side. Creatures standing in or passing through the wall have one-half concealment (20% miss chance).

Only Mardack actually lives within Thorn's Circle. His home is a sparse hovel built of old tree branches and bramble, nestled between a pair of the standing arches for support. All of the other druids of the Council of the Thorn make their homes nearby in the sturdy, low branches of trees. Like Mardack, their abodes are simple wood and wicker structures with no defining features. The druids carry all their worldly possessions with them wherever they go; therefore, their hovels hold little of interest aside from cooking utensils and the like.

Confronting the Council

How the PCs first meet the Council druids depends on when the party arrives. The timeline can be altered to allow the PCs more time to rescue Dedermont before his impending sacrifice. The two scenarios described below assume the PCs approach Thorn's Circle via the animal trail from the north and have been detected by Mardack's spies. Feel free to change or adapt this encounter as you see fit.

Scenario #1: The PCs arrive after the 1st of Patchwall (after the new moon). The druids have already sacrificed Dedermont for his crimes by the time the PCs reach Thorn's Circle. As the PCs approach, they spot a rough skin sack hanging from a tree near the clearing's edge, obviously meant to be discovered. Inside the bag they find the head of the major, drained of blood and stuffed with all manner of thorny plants. Mardack had intended to have one of his druids take the head to Leukish but decided instead to leave it for the PCs to find and bring back as testament of the druids' ire. All of the Council druids, minus the apprentices and Adelmar (who remain in their tree-homes

nearby), are gathered inside Thorn's Circle, awaiting the PCs' response. If the PCs attempt to force their way into the circle to exact revenge, the druids respond by first casting *guidance* and *barkskin* on themselves (where applicable) and then walking through the thorn wall, approaching the PCs from different sides. The druids avoiding a direct confrontation, ducking in and out of the thorny hedge while casting their offensive and summoning spells.

If the PCs withdraw from the battle, the Council members let them go, provided the PCs fill Mardack's purpose by carrying Dedermont's head back to the duchy. If two or more of the druids fall or Mardack himself goes down, the remaining druids flee into the forest, with those so able using their Wild Shape ability to aid their flight. For the druids' statistics and spell lists, refer to the "Council of the Thorn" sidebar.

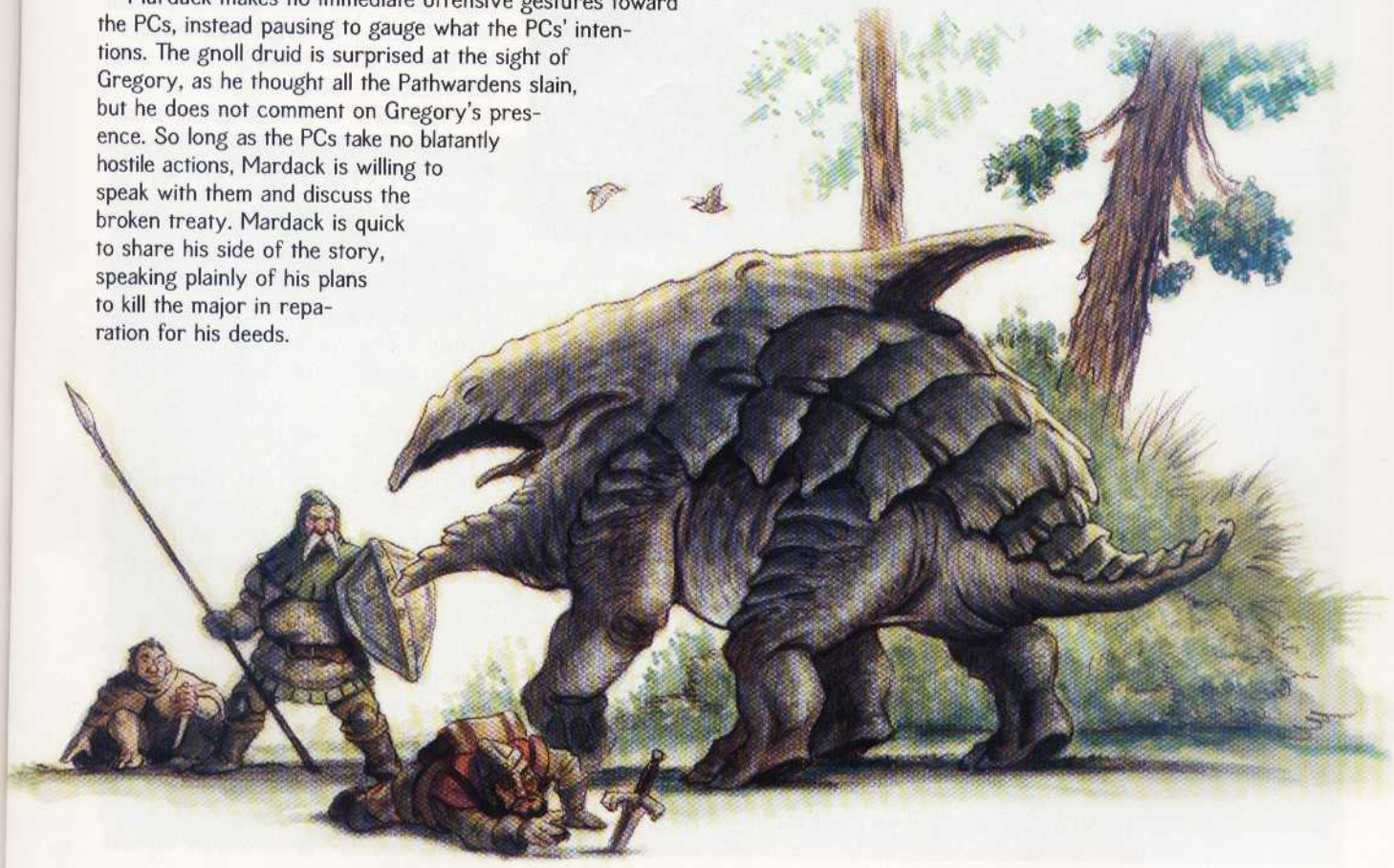
Scenario #2: The PCs arrive before or on the 1st of Patchwall (before the new moon). Mardack gathers his druids together to "welcome" the PCs, arraying his forces about the Circle for maximum offensive potential. Shortly before the PCs arrive, the druids cast spells on themselves, as denoted by an asterisk on their spell lists. The druids' positions are indicated on the map of Thorn's Circle (see next page): Mardack stands before the Circle's thorn barricade, in plain view, with Clank standing nearby. Flanking the gnoll druid and obscured by the thorn wall stand the druids Grask and Harldam. In a tree to Mardack's left roosts a small raven that is actually Larenth in his Wild Shape form. Finally, hiding behind the gnarled trunks of the trees to Mardack's left and right are Adelmar and Efner respectively. They use their Hide skills to remain unseen.

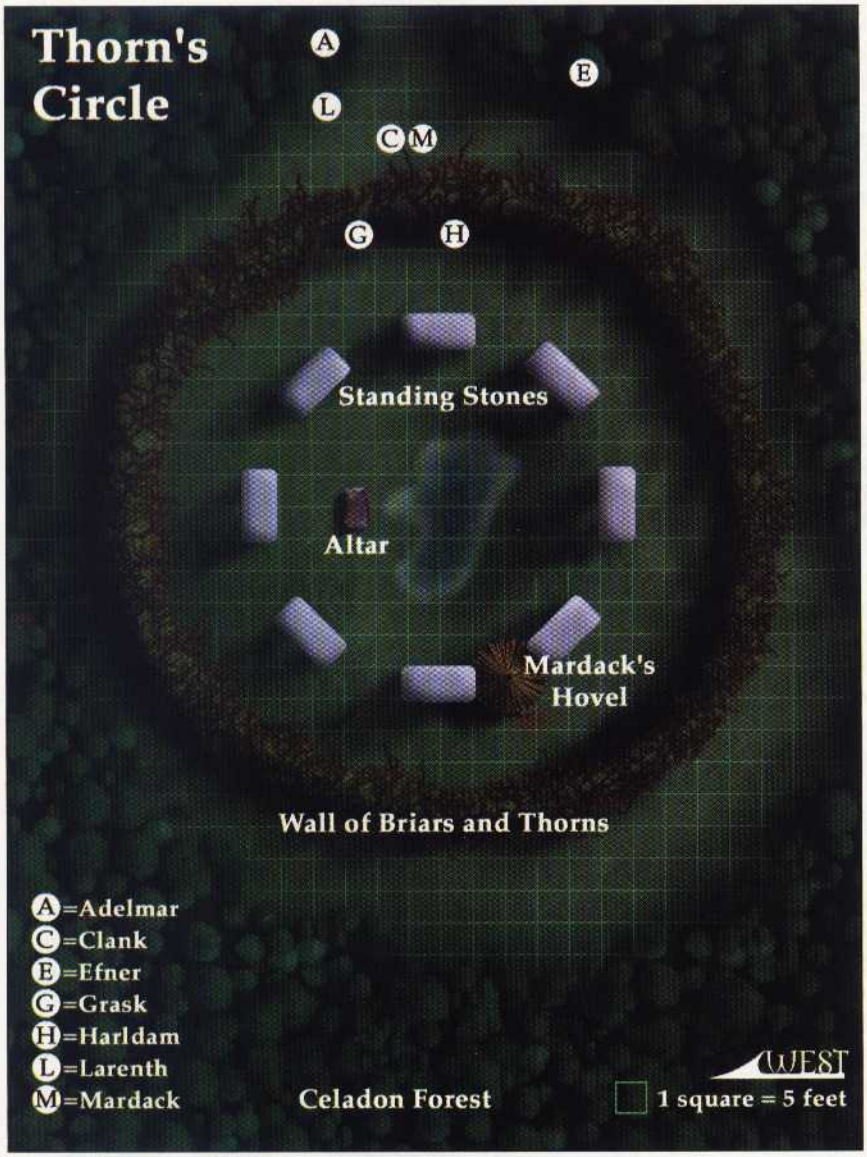
Mardack makes no immediate offensive gestures toward the PCs, instead pausing to gauge what the PCs' intentions. The gnoll druid is surprised at the sight of Gregory, as he thought all the Pathwardens slain, but he does not comment on Gregory's presence. So long as the PCs take no blatantly hostile actions, Mardack is willing to speak with them and discuss the broken treaty. Mardack is quick to share his side of the story, speaking plainly of his plans to kill the major in reparation for his deeds. As proof that he holds Dedermont hostage, Mardack shows the PCs the *bead of stasis* containing the trapped ranger.

At this point, the PCs have a chance to persuade Mardack of Dedermont's true intentions. Whomever the PCs choose to speak on their behalf must make a successful Diplomacy check (DC 15) to alter Mardack's perception of the situation. If the PCs have the journal they found in Dedermont's bedroom (see "Dedermont's Keep," area 13) and show this to Mardack, the check's difficulty is lowered to DC 12. With a successful check, Mardack realizes his error and promptly releases the captured ranger and returns Dedermont's remaining *beads of stasis*. A failed check means that Mardack believes the PCs are trying to deceive him, in which case the gnoll orders the PCs to leave the druids' territory immediately or "face dire consequences."

Feel free to roleplay the encounter with Mardack without die rolls, basing the gnoll druid's response on how convincingly the PCs plead their case.

If forced into battle by the PCs' actions or words, the druids fight as described in Scenario #1 above, avoiding melee combat while casting offensive and summoning spells. Clank guards Mardack, taking no other actions but improving the gnoll druid's AC by 2. Meanwhile, Mardack casts his *entangle* spell centered on enemy spellcasters. Adelmar slides around for a sneak attack on a random PC, while Efner steps into the clearing and hurls daggers. Larenth shifts back to his normal form to cast *summon nature's ally II* (wolf). Finally, Grask and Harldam stride through the thorn wall and each cast a spell: Grask targets a PC barbarian, fighter, ranger, or paladin with *charm person or mammal* while Harldam casts *summon nature's ally II* (wolf).





Successive rounds of combat progress as dictated by you, the DM, with the Council fleeing into the woods after the loss of three or more members or if Mardack is taken down. If Mardack himself is among those fleeing, he drops the platinum chain containing the *beads of stasis* (including the one containing Major Dedermont) as he retreats, hoping that the victorious PCs settle for the prize and allow his surviving Council members to withdraw.

For the complete statistics and spell lists of the Council druids, refer to the "Council of the Thorn" sidebar.

Freeing Major Dedermont

Once the *bead of stasis* that contains Lucien is recovered, the PCs must still deduce how to release him. An *identify* spell or successful Bardic Knowledge check (DC 25) provides sufficient insight, while a successful Use Magic Device check (DC 25) enables one to free the trapped ranger. If the PCs are not inclined to tamper with the *beads*, they can bring them back to Nellix. In this case, Lord Chamberlain Drevis appropriates the platinum chain and the remaining unused *beads* and has the duke's wizards determine how to free Dedermont.

Creature (EL 8): If released from the *bead of stasis*, Major Dedermont recalls battling monsters as they rampaged through his keep, but he has no memory of facing Mardack or the time spent trapped within the *bead*. He heartily thanks the PCs for rescuing him and repays them for their kindness by allowing them to keep the remaining *beads*.

Lucien Dedermont, Male Human Rgr8: CR 8; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 8d10+24; hp 76; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 *studded leather armor*); Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+4 +1d6 fire/crit ×3, *+1 flaming battleaxe*); +9/+4 melee (1d8+1 +1d6 fire/crit ×3, *+1 flaming battleaxe*), +9/+4 (1d6+1/crit 19-20, *+1 short sword*); SA favored enemies (1st—aberrations, 2nd—beasts); SQ Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting (in light or no armor), Track; AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Animal Empathy +8, Concentration +9, Handle Animal +6, Heal +5, Hide +8, Intuit Direction +5, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Speak Language (Elven, Gnoll), Ride +6, Search +7, Spot +6, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Spells (2/1): 1st—*entangle, pass without trace;* 2nd—*sleep.*

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, +1 flaming battleaxe, +1 short sword, Pathwarden ring (5 gp; see area 3 of "Dedermont's Keep" for a description), belt pouch containing 34 gp and 16 sp.

Description: Major Dedermont is an imposing 45-year-old man with broad, heavily muscled shoulders and deeply tanned skin. He has light brown hair, green eyes, and a close cut beard bleached by constant exposure to sunlight. White scars criss-cross the ranger's arms and legs—reminders of old battles.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters managed to talk Mardack into releasing the major, they should receive the XP value of the entire Council, as if they had defeated the druids in combat. Bonuses for good roleplaying in the range of 50-500 XP should also be awarded to deserving individuals at this point, at your discretion.

The return trip to Nellix can be as peaceful or perilous as you wish, though the party has no more encounters with the Council of the Thorn for the time being. If the PCs did not attempt to rescue Dedermont, Gregory informs the Lord Chamberlain of this fact when they return, motivating Drevis to rescind the promised reward for not completing all assigned duties. If, in the process of freeing the major, the PCs managed to convince Mardack of his error, Drevis doubles their reward for saving the duke the trouble of having the dispute settled.

If the PCs rescue Dedermont, they gain a powerful friend. The Pathwarden feels indebted to the characters and repays this debt by assisting them in future exploits. After explaining the circumstances behind the fall of the keep to Duke Karll, Dedermont is reduced to the rank of captain as punishment, pardoned for his actions, and given command of the keep once more. If the PCs did not clear the stronghold of monsters, they might be called upon by their new Pathwarden friend to help in an assault to reclaim the fort for the duchy. Other spin-off adventures include Dedermont asking the PCs to assist him in recruiting a new brace of cadets for Pathwarden training; ranger PCs are invited to join as well. This would be a perfect scenario for any character wishing to pick up the ranger class or retire into NPC status.

After seeing the trouble wrought by his decree to clear the Celadon Forest of monsters, the duke annuls the order. If the bulette was not killed by the PCs, it heads north to threaten the town of Nellix, and which time the duke might hire the PCs to hunt down and kill the destructive beast.

Finally, there is the Council of the Thorn. If the PCs found a peaceful solution to the misunderstanding, relations between the druids and the duke are strained, but there is no open conflict. If the party killed any Council members, the druids might return at a later date to challenge the PCs. If Mardack was among those slain, the Council is not heard from for months until an internal power struggle ends with Larenth emerging as the new leader. In either case, the druids abandon their claim on the northern Celadon Forest, allowing it to remain in control of the duchy for the foreseeable future. Ω

This is Matt's fourth appearance in DUNGEON Magazine. *He would like to dedicate this adventure to his wife of three years, Angela, and to the editors, who helped immensely during the transition to 3rd Edition.*

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (EL) for all of the encounters in "Natural Selection."

Area	Encounter Description	EL
–	Lord Drevis, Male Human Ari5	4
–	Ankhegs (2)	5
–	Male Kobolds (6)	3
	Chief Seldank, Male Kobold Bbn2	
3	Dire Rats (10)	4
5	Displacer Beasts (2)	6
7	Male Kobolds (3)	1/4
9	Garsh, Male Troll	5
	Male Kobolds (4)	
12	Mimic (1)	4
14	Kelmz, Male Troll	5
	Male Kobolds (5)	
16	Harpies (2)	6
18	Male Kobolds (6 per room)	1
19	Gregory Evenhand, Male Human Rgr2	2
21	Carrion Crawlers (2)	6
22	Ochre Jelly (1)	5
–	Bulette (1)	7
–	Mardack, Male Gnoll Drd7	8+
	Grask, Male Gnoll Drd5	
	Larenth, Male Half-Orc Drd5	
	Harldam, Male Hobgoblin Drd3	
	Adelmar, Male Gnoll Drd2/Rog2	
	Clank, Male Hobgoblin	
	Efner, Male Kobold	

New Magic Item

Beads of Stasis

Beads of stasis are tiny, black spheres with a mirrorlike shine. They measure three quarters of an inch in diameter and weigh nearly an ounce. When discovered, these spheres are always on a chain of silver or platinum and accompanied by an obsidian bead engraved with a command word. The chain and obsidian bead do not radiate magic. Roll 2d6 to determine the number of *beads of stasis* on a given chain.

A *bead of stasis* unerringly strikes its target provided the target is visible to the thrower. Upon impact, the *bead* momentarily expands to form a 10-foot-radius globe of energy that affects up to 10 Hit Dice of living creatures, friend and foe. A creature need only be partially encapsulated by the globe to be affected. Constructs, undead, and other creatures with 11 Hit Dice or more are not affected.

Any susceptible creature touched by the globe must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC 23) or be imprisoned inside the *bead* and placed in stasis. A creature who makes the save suffers no ill effects from the globe. Those who fail the save are trapped inside the globe, which immediately shrinks back to bead size.

A *bead of stasis* targets creatures with the highest Hit Dice first until it exceeds its 10-HD capacity, at which point it affects creatures of progressively lower Hit Dice. For example, if a *bead* is hurled at a group of three 4-HD ogres, two of the ogres (picked at random) would be targeted, while the third would not (even if one or both of the targeted ogres made a successful saving throw). If a *bead* were hurled at a group of two 6-HD trolls, three 3-HD carrion crawlers, and four 1/2-HD kobolds, one of the trolls, one of the carrion crawlers, and two of the kobolds would be targeted (6 HD + 3 HD + 1/2 HD + 1/2 HD = 10 HD).

Creatures trapped within a *bead* are held in *temporal stasis* (as the spell). When a *bead* is filled to capacity, a dull glow emanates from its core, turning the bead foggy gray. Trapped beings can be released with a successful *dispel magic* (cast against 17th-level) or by speaking the command word etched on the obsidian sphere.

When the proper command word is uttered within 3 feet of a *bead of stasis*, all trapped creatures are instantly released, appearing within 30 feet of the *bead*. A *bead* can only be used once and is gone forever once the creatures within are released.

Caster Level: 18th; *Prerequisites:* Enchant Wondrous Item, *imprisonment*, *temporal stasis*; *Market Price:* 8,100 gp per bead; *Weight:* 1 oz per bead.

Council of the Thorn

The Council of the Thorn was formed almost a century ago, its members pledged to protecting the woodland from the slowly expanding Duchy of Urnst. The militant druids abide no trespass. Only out of dire need to rid Celadon Forest of a dragon interloper did Mardack, the current leader, grant a portion of the forest to the Duke of Urnst, a bargain he has long regretted and since rescinded.

Mardack, Male Gnoll Drd7: CR 8; Medium-Size Humanoid (7 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 2d8-2 (gnoll) plus 7d8-7 (Drd); hp 38; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 natural, +2 Dex, +4 *leather armor*), 20 (with *barkskin*); Atk +7 melee (1d6+1, *staff of swarming insects*); or +8 ranged (1d4+1/crit 19-20, thrown dagger); SA *wild shape* 3/day, summon wolves (see below); SQ nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Animal Empathy +3, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +3, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +6 (includes Alertness feat), Sense Motive +6, Speak Language (Common), Scry +7, Spellcraft +4, Spot +6 (includes Alertness feat), Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Alertness, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll.

SA—Summon Wolves (Ex): By howling, Mardack can summon 1d6 wolves (animal companions) from the surrounding forest; the pack arrives in 1d4+4 rounds. See page 204 of the *Monster Manual* for the wolves' statistics.

Spells (6/5/4/2/1): 0—*cure minor wounds* (×2), *detect magic, guidance*, mending, resistance*;* 1st—*animal friendship, cure light wounds, entangle, faerie fire, magic fang;* 2nd—*barkskin*, resist elements, speak with animals*, warp wood;* 3rd—*cure moderate wounds, spike growth;* 4th—*scry**.

* indicates spells already cast.

Possessions: +2 leather armor, staff of swarming insects (25 charges), four *beads of stasis* (see "New Magic Item" sidebar; one contains Major Dedermont) on a platinum chain (worth 250 gp), three divine scrolls (*cure serious wounds, dispel magic,* and *giant vermin,* each cast at 7th level), sickle, three daggers, spell components.

Description: An imposing figure, Mardack appear shorter due to his hunched posture. At his great age (40 years old), Mardack is withered and frail, although his tired body belies impressive strength. He has sallow gray skin covered in short white fur spotted with silver. His mane is dull silver, and his eyes are a vibrant green unheard of among gnolls. Mardack wears a homespun brown robe that helps him blend in with the natural surroundings.

Leader of the Council for the past 25 years, Mardack rules by diplomacy and magical prowess, not brute force. He is gifted with a swift tongue and quick wit, which he prefers to wield over weapons. Like most druids, he is fanatical about preserving nature, although he is more tolerant of outsiders than others on the Council. Believing that the rangers from Urnst deliberately broke the treaty, Mardack lost his temper and ordered an immediate strike against the Pathwardens. He now holds a grudge against the Duchy of Urnst in general and against Major Dedermont in particular.

Grask, Male Gnoll Drd5: CR 6; Medium-Size Humanoid (7 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 2d8+2 (gnoll) plus 4d8+4 (Drd); hp 32; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 natural, +1 Dex, +3 *leather armor*); Atk +6 melee (2d4+1/crit ×4, masterwork scythe); or +5 ranged (1d4+1/crit 19-20, thrown dagger); SA *wild shape* 1/day; SQ nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Skills: Animal Empathy +2, Concentration +4, Handle Animal +1, Heal +5, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +5, Speak Language (Common), Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +3. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Spell Focus (Evocation).

Possessions: +1 leather armor, masterwork scythe, two daggers, divine scroll (*cure light wounds*), spell components.

Spells (5/4/3/1): 0—*flare* (×2), *guidance*, light, resistance*;* 1st—*cure light wounds, endure elements, faerie fire, summon nature's ally I;* 2nd—*charm person or mammal, heat metal, resist elements;* 3rd—*call lightning.*

* indicates spells already cast.

Description: Grask has a large, muscled frame and broad shoulders. His skin is greenish-gray with brown fur. His eyes and mane are muddy brown. He seems particularly taciturn and detests outsiders.

Grask is Mardack's second-in-command. He is coarse and gruff with a confrontational personality. When the Council assaulted Dedermont's Keep, Grask was at the fore, casting spells to the detriment of his foes. He holds a special enmity for Larenth, whom he sees as a threat to his position.

Larenth, Male Half-orc Drd5: CR 5; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 5d8; hp 28; Init -2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (-2 Dex, +1 small wooden shield, +3 hide armor); Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, sickle); or +1 ranged (1d4+2/crit 19-20, thrown dagger); SA wild shape 1/day; SD nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 6, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 17, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +4, Heal +7, Intuit Direction +7, Spot +7, Scry +4, Spellcraft +4, Wilderness Lore +7. *Feats:* Brew Potion, Craft Wand.

Spells (5/4/3/2): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance*, light, resistance;* 1st—*animal friendship, cure light wounds, endure elements, goodberry;* 2nd—*barkskin*, heat metal, summon nature's ally II;* 3rd—*poison, spike growth.*

* indicates spells already cast.

Possessions: Hide armor, small wooden shield, four potions (*barkskin, fire breath, resist elements,* and *tree shape,* all cast at 5th-level), *wand of cure light wounds* (18 charges; cast at 5th-level), three daggers, spell components.

Description: Larenth was raised by human foster parents, but his orc heritage shows through with his green-tinged skin and sloped forehead. Larenth is something of a klutz, often getting tangled up in his own long limbs or tripping over his large, flat feet.

All of the other druids aside from Grask find the half-orc good company. The others suspect that if Grask doesn't put a knife in his back, Larenth might someday lead the Council. When Mardack ordered the attack on Dedermont's Keep, Larenth was the sole voice of dissension, stating that a war with the duchy would end badly for both sides. Although he was overruled by Mardack and ordered to partake in the siege, he bears the head of the Council no animosity and is merely saddened by what had to be.

Harldam, Male Hobgoblin Drd3: CR 3; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 3d8+3; hp 20; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor), 14 (with Dodge feat); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/crit ×3, halfspear); or +3 ranged (1d6+1/crit ×3, halfspear); SQ nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Concentration +7, Craft (leatherworking) +7, Craft (trapmaking) +7, Intuit Direction +5, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (history) +7, Listen +6 (includes Alertness feat), Speak Language (Common, Dwarven, Goblin, Orc), Spellcraft +5, Spot +6 (includes Alertness feat), Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge.

Spells (4/3/2): 0—*detect magic, guidance*, light, resistance*;* 1st—*cure light wounds, entangle, faerie fire;* 2nd—*warp wood, summon nature's ally II.*

* indicates spells already cast.

Possessions: Leather armor, two halfspears, two daggers, *potion of cure moderate wounds,* spell components.

Description: Harldam has ruddy skin, a pug nose, jowls, and pointy ears that jut from the sides of his triangular head like comical handles. He limps slightly, favoring his right leg from an injury he received over a decade ago battling humans loggers in the northern reaches of the forest.

Harldam acts as the Council's tactician. Like most of his race, the crafty hobgoblin excels at the art of war and is well versed in its lore. It was he who devised the attack scheme on Dedermont's Keep which allowed the Council an easy victory. When not advising the Council, he keeps himself busy inventing devious traps to snare trespassers.

Adelmar, Male Gnoll Drd2/Rog2: CR 5; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 2d8+2 (gnoll) plus 2d8+2 (Drd) plus 3d6+3 (Rog); hp 33; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 natural, +4 Dex, +2 leather armor), 18 (with Dodge feat); Atk +7 melee (1d4+1/crit 19-20, masterwork dagger with Weapon Finesse feat); or +7 ranged (1d4+1/crit 19-20, hurled masterwork dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; SD evasion, nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +2, Concentration +3, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Intuit Direction +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +6, Pick Pocket +5, Speak Language (Common), Spellcraft +1, Spot +5, Tumble +6, Wilderness Lore +3. *Feats:* Dodge, Weapon Finesse (dagger).

Possessions: Leather armor, two masterwork daggers, six daggers, spell components.

Spells (4/3): 0—*flare* (×2), *guidance*, light;* 1st—*cure light wounds, obscuring mist, pass without trace.*

* indicates spells already cast.

Description: Adelmar's skin is ash gray and covered in a thick coat of matted, black fur. His eyes are brown. The graceful druid moves with a dancelike grace, as though each footfall were timed to an unheard rhythm.

Before joining the Council, Adelmar was a drifter and forest wanderer. He met Mardack while hiding from people he had robbed. The rogue was found himself strangely attracted to the Council's simple, accepting lifestyle, and he entreated Mardack to teach him the druidic ways.

Although he has wholeheartedly embraced the path of nature, Adelmar still keeps his roguish skills honed to a fine point. He often acts as the eyes and ears of the Council, slipping unnoticed into nearby settlements to gather information and return unseen.

Clank, Male Hobgoblin (Apprentice): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 hide armor); Atk +5 melee (1d10+4, greatclub); or +3 ranged (1d6+4, hurled club); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +3, Listen +4 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +3, Spot +5 (includes Alertness feat). *Feat:* Alertness.

Possessions: Hide armor, greatclub, four clubs.

Description: Clank is a hobgoblin of tremendous girth. His wide body is covered in thick slabs of muscle. Clank bears the typical physical traits of his race; dark red skin covered in short, russet colored fur, brown eyes, and yellow teeth.

Not as bright as the average hobgoblin, Clank has lived his entire life by brute strength, earning respect for his impressive combat abilities. Clank eventually tired of his role as the tribal "battering ram" and abandoned his kin. Traveling to the Celadon Forest, he met his distant relative, Harldam, and was introduced to the other members of the Council. Sensing potential in the big brute, Mardack invited Clank to join the druids as an apprentice, an offer the hobgoblin instantly accepted. Still in training, Clank looks forward to the day when he is truly one of the Council.

Efner, Male Kobold (Apprentice): CR 1/6; Small Humanoid (Reptilian) (3 ft. tall); HD 1/2d8-1; hp 3; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +5 breastplate, +1 small wooden shield); Atk -1 melee (1d6-2/crit 19-20, short sword); or +2 ranged (1d4-2/crit 19-20, hurled dagger); SQ light sensitivity, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Craft (trapmaking) +3, Hide +8, Listen +4 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +4, Speak Language (Common), Search +2, Spot +4 (includes Alertness feat). *Feat:* Alertness.

Possessions: Breastplate, small wooden shield, short sword, four daggers, 10-gp citrine in pouch.

Description: Efner's scaly hide is a rusty bronze color and completely hairless. He sports a pair of small, ivory horns, and his eyes are feral red, seeming to glow with their own inner light.

Efner has spent all his life in the Celadon Forest, dwelling with his small tribe in the northeast tip of the woods. When Dedermont and his rangers began gathering the monsters of the forest, Efner's tribe was captured. Escaping entrapment by sheer chance (he was on a scouting mission at the time of the attack), Efner fled to the south to seek asylum with the Council of the Thorn. Since coming to the Council, Efner has fallen under Mardack's wing, as the master druid sees promise in the kobold. The other druids find Efner's wheedling and conniving a bit much and generally dislike him.

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By Tracy Raye Hickman

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